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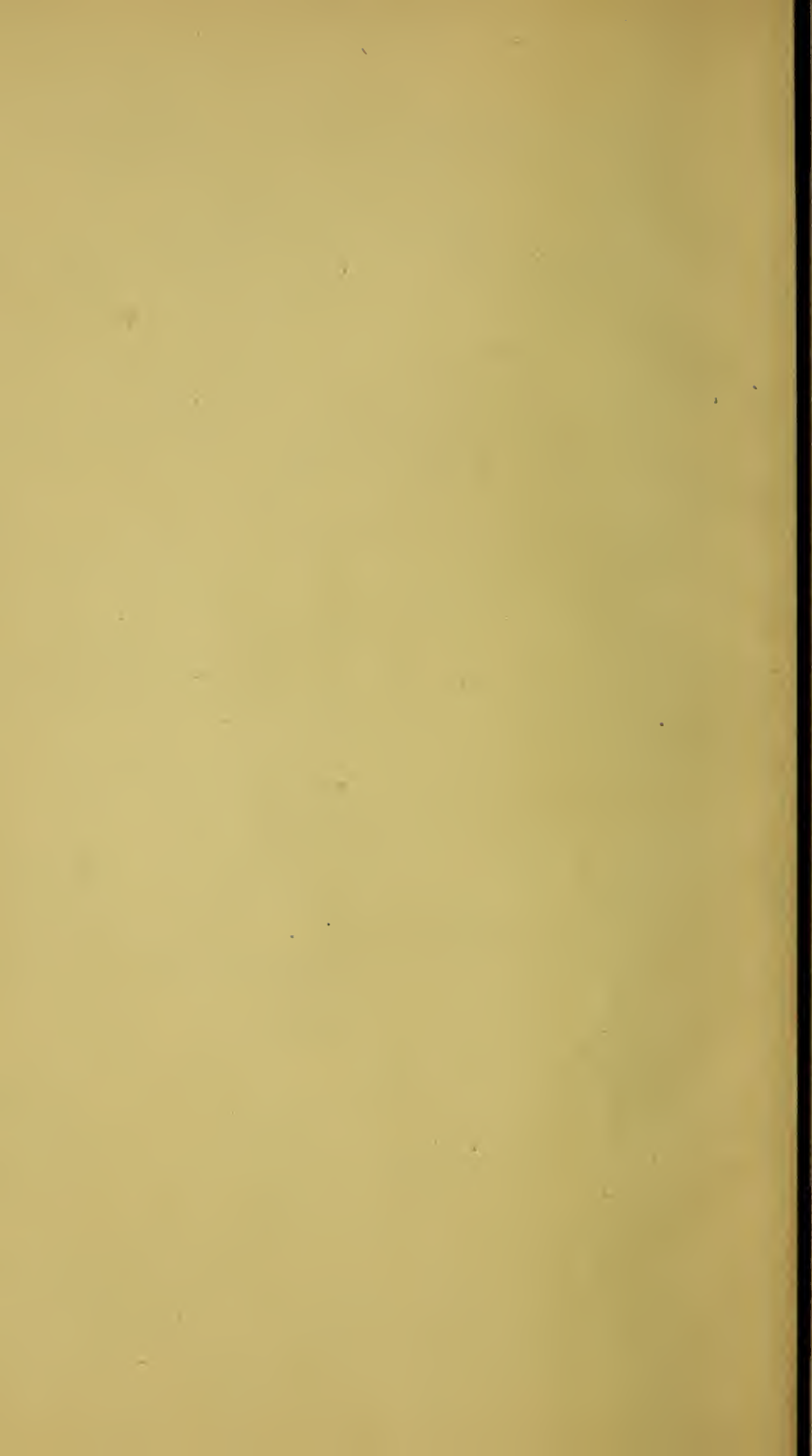
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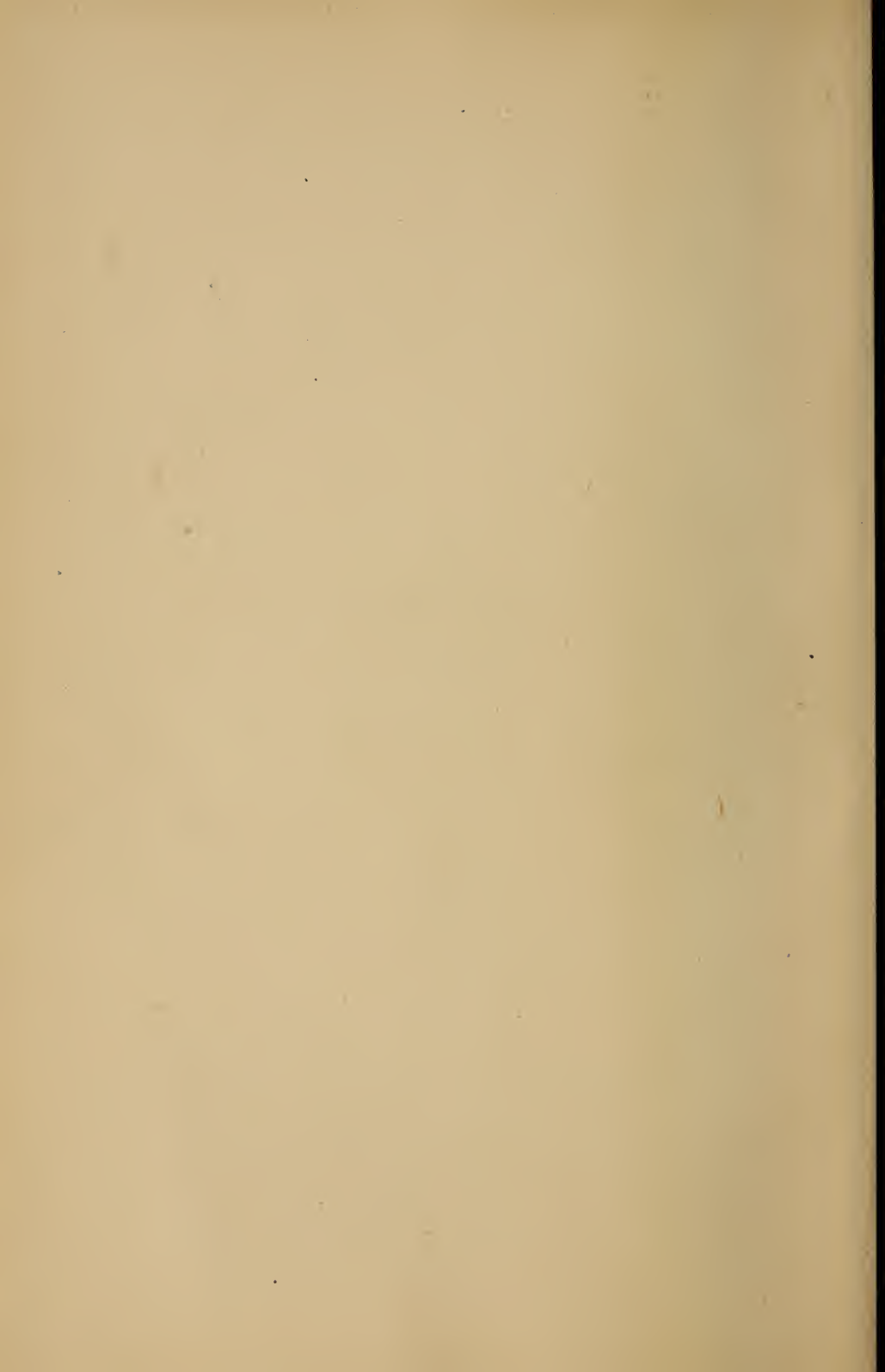
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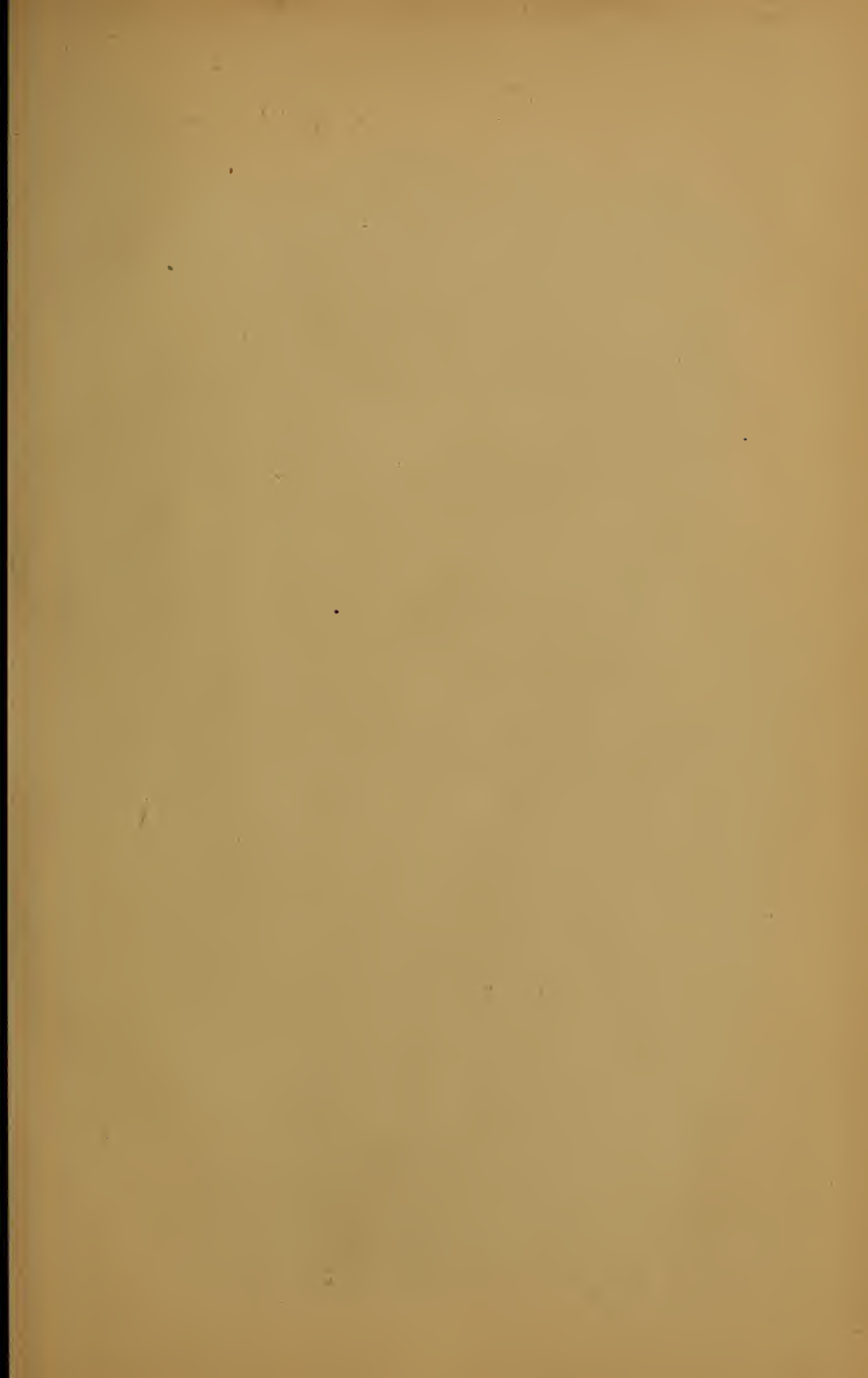
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STRUGGLES
OF THE
EARLY CHRISTIANS.





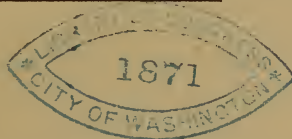


A SCENE IN JUDEA

STRUGGLES
OF THE
EARLY CHRISTIANS.

FROM THE DAYS OF OUR SAVIOUR TO THE REIGN
OF CONSTANTINE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
By REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON, D.D.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE circumstances that occasioned this work furnish, perhaps, the best justification of the design. The teacher of a class of young persons, wishing to give a course of instruction in the history of our religion, found no text-book suited to the purpose. These exercises were prepared in their order, from such historical sources as were within reach, and proved so satisfactory both to the intelligence and the spiritual affections of the pupils, as to suggest their publication. There was thus furnished the advantage of a direct object, at every step, and the test of practical use was immediately applied. The place which the volume undertakes to fill was not occupied before; and the experiment of its usefulness has been made.

The study of Church history hardly needs

recommendation. If much that passes under that name proves unattractive or unprofitable, it must be from the unskilfulness of the writer, or the dryness of the treatment, not from the nature of the subject. To go back to the earliest workings of the Christian Life in the world; to enter into communion with the primitive faith and zeal; to hold up for contemplation the grand characters of ancient believers; to witness their sublime patience and righteous sincerity; to trace the movement of God's own hand in the events that shaped and extended his invincible Church; to watch the growth and change of opinions; to be warned by the corruptions of truth, and the inroads of error; all this is surely a right and noble part of a true Christian education. Place should clearly be made for it in all wise and comprehensive plans of religious reading and study, whether in the Sunday School, or in the family. It enlightens the scholar's mind, enlarges his charity, furnishes him with the means of a fairer judgment of doctrines, sects, and eccle-

siastical measures, and, if he will allow it, enriches his heart with new inspirations of that Spirit of all comfort and grace which the Saviour promised to his disciples.

For the manner in which the work has been executed, the reader or teacher is referred to its contents. With all thoughtful persons, the style will not be less esteemed for its simplicity and plainness. The object has been to convey the current of the narrative, in as little space, and with as much fulness and clearness, as possible. The period embraced extends from the scene at Pentecost to the death of Constantine.

The undersigned has been requested to introduce the volume to the public by a preface, and does so with friendly wishes for its success, and for the cause it seeks to promote. Having entire confidence in the fidelity and competency of the authorship, he believes it will be found free from any errors of consequence, and that its statements are sustained by standard historians.

F. D. H.

THE historical sources referred to in the preceding introduction, from which the present work is compiled and abridged, are Milman, Priestley, Eliot, Kip, Neander, Livermore, Conybeare and Howson, Hale, and Josephus. To these and other smaller works the writer is indebted for information obtained upon the subject of the following pages.

R. W. B.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

THE History of the Christian Church properly commenced with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, mentioned in the Book of Acts.

The work called the Acts of the Apostles portrays some of the most important incidents connected with the early Christian Church, from the moment of Christ's ascension, until a short time before the great Jewish war, a period of nearly thirty years. This book is of great importance on many accounts; while there are four Gospels to describe the advent of the Messiah, there is only this authentic history of the planting of the church during the first generation. Containing, as it does, the fulfilment of Christ's promise of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples and the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian church, untrammelled by Jewish bondage, nothing can exceed the value and interest of this wonderful history.

The date of the work is fixed at about A.D. 64, since the history comes down to the period of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, yet does not relate his martyrdom, which is supposed to have occurred about

two years afterwards, at that city, under the reign of Nero. The place of its composition was probably Greece or Rome.

Its author was Luke, the Evangelist, who wrote this work as a second part to his Gospel, and was himself immediately connected with some of the events of his history. Acts, 16: 10, 11; 20: 21, 27, 28. This writer is the physician mentioned by Paul—Col. 4: 14. The Acts are referred to by most of the Christian Fathers. Augustine, in A.D. 395, speaks of it as being the only history of the apostles which has been received by the church, all others having been rejected, as not to be relied upon. He also adds that “Mark and Luke wrote at a time when their writings might be approved, not only by the church, but also by apostles still living.” Eusebius, of the fourth century, speaks of the “two inspired books written by Luke the physician, who was connected with Paul, and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the Apostles. This Gospel is a record of events related to him by these apostles. But his second work, the Acts of the apostles, he composed, not from what he had heard from others, but from what he had seen himself.” In A.D. 230, Origen speaks of “Luke who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.”

Jerome, writing in A.D. 392, speaks of the second work written by Luke the physician, which contains the history of the infancy of the church.

Constant allusions are thus made to it by the early

Fathers. In this work are exhibited to us the obstacles which sprang up in the path of the first preachers of Christianity, both from religion and irreligion; from prince and from people; from superstition and from philosophy.

At the commencement of the book of Acts we find an account of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled disciples.

“They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” This was the founding of the church of Christ.

The chosen members of the infant church were thus formed into one body essentially distinguished from the world at large. The Heavenly Founder had so ordered it, that representatives of all nations of the earth should be assembled to witness its establishment. The scene of this extraordinary incident must have been some place of general resort. The time, the third hour, nine in the morning, was that of public prayer in the temple; multitudes, therefore, were thronging all the avenues to the temple. In the popular estimation, the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship were altogether extinguished by his death. The few influential persons who had been inclined to embrace his cause, even during his lifetime had maintained their unpopular opinions in secret. The ostensible leaders were men of low birth, humble occupations, deficient education, and—no unimportant objection in the mind of the higher portion of the Jewish nation—Galileans. Never indeed was a sect so completely centred in the person of its founder. The intelligence

that the religion of Jesus had appeared again, and that those humble, ignorant, and despised Galileans were making converts by thousands, in a most sudden manner, must have caused great astonishment. Thus invigorated with courage, and at once endowed with commanding eloquence, these scattered followers of Jesus burst upon the public attention. The whole speech of Peter clashed with the strong prejudices of those by whom he was surrounded,—asserting as he did the Messiahship of his Master in a form as irreconcilable with their own preconceived notions as with those of the rest of the people. It reproached them with their rejection of him and their barbarity towards him, and placed him far above king David, the pride and glory of the nation. The rite of baptism was at once instituted, and three thousand converts immediately formed themselves into a Christian community.

As the teachers of Christianity had to make their permanent residence in Jerusalem, at a distance from their homes, their wants rendered it necessary for many of the converts to throw their property, or part of it, into a common stock. The preaching and miracles of the apostles, and the active zeal and charity of the disciples, headed by the seventy who had followed Christ at an early period of his ministry, led to the daily increase of the church.

Such is the view we have of the Christian Church at its commencement; and thenceforward we see it working out, step by step, the designs of Providence. If it had been so ordained, Christianity might have

been established at once and permanently, by compelling the events of the age to coöperate in the work. But such was not the divine will. The Christian religion was endowed with light and strength, that it might, having that light in itself, spread and enlarge by the quickening of the divine energy with which it was at first established.

The second recorded speech of the Apostle Peter produced a powerful impression, and five thousand converts were added. The Sanhedrim had up to this period remained passive; but on learning the effect thus produced at the very gate of their temple, and the miracle performed by Peter and John, this influential body deemed it necessary to interfere, and to arrest, if possible, the rapid progress of the faith. The second speech of the apostle was in a somewhat calmer and more conciliating tone than the former. It extenuated the ignorance of the people, and even of the rulers, which had led them to reject Jesus, and dwelt on the advantages of belief in him as the Messiah. Such a speech seemed to demand the interference of the civil authorities. Peter and John were accordingly seized, and kept for one night in prison. This, however, was only productive of fresh manifestations of the divine authority whereby they spoke; for the next day, on being set free, they returned to their companions, another effusion of the Holy Spirit was granted, and the power and zeal of the disciples received a further accession of strength. The converts thereupon made were as ready as their

predecessors to bestow their possessions on the community to which they had become united.

The superiority which Christianity was gaining over the established Judaism, led the Sanhedrim, after a short time, to make another effort to suppress it. The apostles were again cast into prison. In the morning they were sought for in vain ; they had again taken up their station in the temple, although they obeyed the citation of the Sanhedrim ; the language of Peter was more bold and resolute than ever ; he openly proclaimed, in the face of the astonished council, the crucified Jesus to be the Prince and the Saviour, and asserted the inspiration of himself and his companions by the Spirit of God. In conformity with the counsel of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, the rulers were induced to dismiss them, after inflicting a slight punishment, and they immediately resumed their duties.

The increased amount of property placed at the disposal of the apostles, rendered it necessary that proper persons should be appointed to superintend the distribution of it ; accordingly, seven prudent men, in whom all parties had the utmost confidence, were chosen for that purpose. The success of Stephen, one of the number so chosen, and the freedom with which he argued against the errors of certain foreign Jews, led to his arraignment for blasphemy before the tribunal of the high-priest ; and his eloquent defence only serving to increase the rage of the priesthood, he was thrust out of the city and stoned to death. The

people soon found that even the priesthood was not proof against the spreading apostacy, for many of that order enrolled themselves among the disciples of Christ. The martyrdom of Stephen proved that Christian faith was stronger than the fear of death.

After the death of Stephen, Luke makes mention that there was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem, and the Christians were scattered abroad throughout Palestine, with the exception of the apostles, who remained firm at their posts. This early trial of the church was productive of important benefits. Philip, one of the deacons, preached in Samaria with great success. One remarkable conversion was that of the Ethiopian officer who held the highest station and influence with Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. The Jews had spread in great numbers to that region; and the return of a person of such influence, a declared convert to the new religion, could not but be productive of important results.

But by far the most important result of the death of Stephen, was its connection with the conversion of St. Paul. To extend Christianity in the enlightened West, where its most permanent conquests were to be made,—to emancipate it from the fetters of Judaism, a man was wanting of higher education and more liberal accomplishments than were possessed by any one of the twelve apostles. Such an instrument was found in Saul of Tarsus. None of the other apostles were miraculously converted to the faith; there was nothing, it would seem, in their situation, or personal

characters, to render an extraordinary display of the divine presence necessary to their conviction. They were men of simple manners and ingenuous minds ; poor, unlearned, and unambitious. Their reason had not been blinded by sophistry ; they had little to do with the rulers of their nation ; and the unprejudiced view they took of Christ's actions, character, and discourse, would satisfy them, without a particular miracle wrought for their private conviction, that he was indeed the Messiah. Saul was differently circumstanced ; was of a different character ; and nothing less than some occurrence of the most extraordinary and unprecedented character could have arrested so suddenly, and diverted so completely from its settled purpose, a mind of so much strength and intense prejudices. This conversion, therefore, was miraculous, because it was necessary that it should be so. Saul set forth from Jerusalem, his mind imbued with the most violent animosity against these apostates from the faith of his ancestors. He set forth thus manifestly inveterate in his prejudices, unshaken in his ardent attachment to the religion of Moses, the immutability and perpetuity of which he considered it treasonable and impious to question, and with an austere and indignant sense of duty. The solemnity of the circumstances which attended the event of his conversion, was in the highest degree fitted to shadow forth the triumphs by which it was to be followed. The ruling Jews must have heard with amazement that this zealous persecutor of the Christians had arrived at

Damascus blinded, humbled, and that his first step had been to join himself to the party which he had threatened to exterminate. The Christians were far from forward in admitting to their confidence so distinguished a proselyte. At Damascus this prejudice was softened through the influence of Ananias, a Christian of renown, to whom his conversion had been revealed by a vision. But the apostles at Jerusalem were unwilling to believe in his sincerity even three years after his conversion. Instead of assuming at once, as his abilities and character might seem to justify, a distinguished place in the new community into which he had been received — instead of being welcomed as the renegade from an opposite faction usually is by a weak and persecuted party, his early course is lost in obscurity. He passed several years in exile, from which he emerged by slow degrees, and gradually rose to eminence. Part of the three years which elapsed between the conversion of Paul and his first visit to Jerusalem he passed in Arabia. At the close of those three years Damascus was in the power of Aretas, the Arabian King. The Jews obtained sufficient influence with Aretas to carry into effect their designs against the life of Paul. His sudden apostacy from their cause, his extraordinary powers, his ardent zeal, had greatly excited their animosity, and Paul was with difficulty withdrawn from their fury, by being let down from the walls of the prison in which he was confined, in a basket,

the gates being carefully guarded by the Arabian governor.

Among the most distinguished of the first converts was Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, whose commanding character and abilities gave him great influence. When Paul, after his escape from Damascus, arrived at Jerusalem, Barnabas alone espoused his cause, overcame the timid suspicions of the apostles, and Paul was admitted into the Christian community. As peculiarly skilled in the Greek language, his exertions to advance Christianity were particularly addressed to those of the Jews with whom Greek was the spoken tongue. But a new conspiracy again endangering his life, he was carried away by his friends to Cæsarea, and thence proceeded to his native city of Tarsus.

About this time the fears of the Jews were awakened in behalf of their own religious independence, for the very existence of their religious worship was threatened, Caligula having issued orders to place his statue in the temple at Jerusalem. The mind of the whole nation was engrossed by this appalling topic, and to this fact may be attributed the temporary peace enjoyed at this time by the Christian churches. This peace was undisturbed for about three years.

When Herod Agrippa took possession of his hereditary dominions, he made an effort to ingratiate himself with his subjects by the strictest profession of Judaism, and by adopting vigorous means for the suppression of Christianity. James, the brother of St. John,

was the first victim. He appears to have been summarily put to death by the military mandate of the king, without any process of the Jewish law. Peter was cast into prison, perhaps with the intention of putting him to death before the departure of Herod from the capital. He was delivered from his bondage by supernatural intervention. Acts 12: 1-23. A famine prevailed in Judea in the fourth year of Claudius, the last of Herod Agrippa. As Barnabas and Paul proceeded to Jerusalem on their charitable mission to bear the contributions of the Christians in Antioch to their poorer brethren in Judea, they must have arrived there during the height of the persecution. The extraordinary circumstances of the escape of Peter from prison so confounded the king, that for a time the violence of the persecution was suspended, and thus the lives of Paul and Barnabas were in less danger. The death of Herod during the same year, A.D. 44, delivered the Christians from their most inveterate enemy.

The conversion of Saul preceded that of the first Gentile convert, Cornelius, whose divinely authorized admission into the church was the earliest intimation the apostles received that the religion of Christ, with all its benefits, was intended for mankind at large. It was to St. Peter that the vision was granted, which thus enlarged, to an unlimited extent, the boundaries of the Christian Church; an honor which we might well suppose would have been vouchsafed to the newly ordained apostle, whose office it so especially

was to labor in the Gentile world. But Saul had not yet sufficient authority in the church to justify the selection of him as the instrument for making known a doctrine so much in conflict with Jewish prejudices.

A most important change was wrought in the new community, by this breaking down of the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. We do not find that the apostles had entertained any idea of communicating to the Gentiles the blessings of the new religion, until a direct and positive command was given them to that end; nor was it until the devout Cornelius had presented to the mind of Peter the object and meaning of his extraordinary vision, that he exclaimed, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Previous to this period, Christianity had been limited, national, exclusive in its character. It had made rapid and extensive progress throughout the Jewish world, but it was preached by Jews; it was addressed to Jews only. As a universal religion, aspiring to the complete moral conquest of the world, Christianity was destined to encounter three powerful antagonists, — Judaism, Paganism, and Orientalism.

Until Christianity, it may be said without disparagement, from a Jewish sect assumed the dignity of an independent religion, even the external animosity of Judaism had not reached its height. However extraordinary the change wrought in the minds of the

earlier apostles by the spirit of Christianity ; however some of them, especially Peter and John, may have extended their labors beyond the precincts of Palestine, yet Paul appears to have exercised by far the greatest influence, not merely in the conversion of the Gentiles, but in emancipating the Christianity of the Jewish converts from the inveterate influence of their old religion. The proselytes of the gate, that is, those heathens who without acknowledging the claims of the whole law to their obedience had embraced the main principles of Judaism, more particularly the unity of God, were at once admitted into the Christian community. Cornelius was, as it were, the representative of his class. Still, the admission into Christianity was through Judaism.

The new opening for the extension of Christianity, after the conversion of Cornelius, directed the attention of Barnabas to Saul, who since his flight from Jerusalem had remained in secure retirement at Tarsus. From thence he was summoned by Barnabas to Antioch. Antioch, where the body of believers assumed the name of Christians, became the headquarters of the foreign operations of Christianity.

Those foreign operations were at first confined to the Jewish population which was scattered throughout the whole of Syria and Asia Minor.

On the arrival of the apostles in a town which they had not visited before, the first scene of their labors was the synagogue. At the island of Cyprus Paul and Barnabas found flourishing Jewish communities.

The sensation occasioned by their arrival at Paphos, a city on the western extremity of the island, aroused the curiosity of the governor. The miraculous blindness with which the famous magician of the city was smitten, convinced him of the superior claims of the apostles; the beauty of the Christian doctrines charmed him. Such a recognition of its power and beauty by the Roman proconsul, could not but give weight and popular character to the cause of Christianity in Cyprus. From Cyprus they crossed to the southern shore of Asia Minor, landed at Perga in Pamphylia, and passed through the chief cities of that region. At the first considerable city in which they appeared, Antioch in Pisidia, the opposition of the Jews seemed to have been so general, and the favorable disposition of their Gentile hearers so decided, that the apostles avowedly disclaimed all farther connection with the more violent party, and united themselves to the Gentile believers; but the Jews possessed so much influence, especially with some of the women of rank, that they at last prevailed upon the ruling authorities to expel the apostles from the city. At Iconium, to which city they retired, the opposition was still more violent; the popular excitement was so great that they were constrained to fly for their lives into the barbarous district of Lycaonia.

It was not till it had extended beyond the borders of Palestine, that Christianity came into direct collision with Paganism. At Lystra, in Lycaonia, the apostles appear for the first time, in the centre, as it

were, of a Pagan population, and are brought into immediate contact with the old idolatry, there still maintaining a lively and commanding influence over the popular mind. The exhibition of their wonderful powers arouses the religious enthusiasm of the populace, which at once converts them into the Jove and Mercury of their own temples. It is with difficulty that the apostles restrain the people from offering sacrifice to them as gods; and no sooner do they succeed in convincing them that they are but men like themselves, than those who would have been worshippers join with the hostile Jews and become persecutors. Paul, instead of being worshipped as a god, was cast out of the city half dead. The apostles proceeded to Derbe, and thence returned through the same cities to Antioch, in Syria.

The ordination of elders to preside over the Christian community implies their secession from the synagogues of their country. Acts, 14: 23.

In Jerusalem, from the multitude of synagogues which belonged to the different races of foreign Jews, another might arise, without exciting much notice from the heathen population. To the Jew it assumed the appearance of a dangerous and formidable apostacy from the religion of his ancestors. The substitution of a purely religious for a national community, to the Christianized Jew appeared, as it were, a kind of treason against the religious majesty of their ancestors; a conference became necessary between the leaders of the Christian community to avert an inevi-

table collision, which might be fatal to the progress of the new religion. Paul and Barnabas proceeded as delegates from the community at Antioch ; and what is called the council of Jerusalem, a full assembly of all the apostles and elders, with the whole church then present in the metropolis, solemnly debated this great question.

This, it appears, was the first occasion in which a general meeting of the Christian community had been summoned. The situation of affairs called for the exercise of the soundest discretion, united with the utmost moderation of temper. On one side a Pharisaic party had brought into Christianity a vigorous and passionate attachment to the Mosaic institutes, in their strictest and most minute provisions. On the other hand, beyond the borders of Palestine, far the greater number of converts had been formed from that intermediate class which stood between Heathenism and Judaism.

In the second, and more extensive journey of St. Paul, having separated from Barnabas, he was accompanied by Timotheus and Silas, but of the Asiatic part of this journey, though it led through some countries of remarkable interest in the history of Paganism, no particulars are recorded. He passed through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, but instead of continuing his course towards the shore of the Black Sea to Bithynia, admonished by a vision, he passed to Europe, and at Neapolis, in Macedonia, landed the obscure and unregarded individual to whom Europe, in Christianity,

owes the great principle of her civilization, the predominant element in her superiority over the more barbarous and unenlightened quarters of the globe. At Philippi he first came into collision with those interests which were concerned in the maintenance of the popular religion. The proseucha, or oratory of the Jews (the smaller place of worship, which they always established when their community was not sufficiently flourishing to maintain a synagogue), was as usual by the water side. The river, as is always the case in Greece, and in all southern countries, was the resort of the women of the city, partly for household purposes, partly, perhaps, for bathing. Among them was Lydia, whose residence was at Thyatira, and who, from her trading in the costly purple dye, may be supposed to have been a person of considerable wealth and influence;—having been so far enlightened by Judaism as to worship the One God, she became an immediate convert to the Christianity of St. Paul.

Paul's restoration of the female soothsayer from her temporary derangement, thereby disqualifying her for the sordid purposes of her employers, produced a tumult throughout the city; the interests of a powerful body were in jeopardy, for the trade of soothsaying at this time was both common and lucrative. The apostle and his attendants were seized, and arraigned before the magistrates on the charge of introducing an unlawful religion. They were scourged and cast into prison. While their hymn was heard through

the prison, a violent earthquake shook the whole building ; the doors flew open, and the fetters, by which probably they were chained to the walls, were loosened. The affrighted jailer, who was responsible for their safe keeping, believing that the prisoners had escaped, was about to commit suicide. His land was arrested by the calm voice of Paul, and to his surprise he found them remaining quietly in their cells. His fears and his admiration wrought together ; and the jailer of Philippi, with his whole family, embraced the Christian faith. The magistrates, when they found that Paul had the privilege of Roman citizenship, were in their turn alarmed at their hasty infringement of that sacred right, and releasing their prisoners honorably, they were glad to prevail upon them to depart peacefully from the city.

Thus, we have seen Christianity in collision with Polytheism under two of its various forms. At Lys-tra, as still the old poetic faith of a barbarous people, insensible to the progress made elsewhere in the human mind, and devoutly believing the wonders of their native religion ; at Philippi, a provincial town in a more cultivated part of Greece, but still at no high state of intellectual advancement, as connected with the vulgar arts of itinerant traders in popular superstition. In Athens, Paganism had a totally different character ; inquiring, argumentative, skeptical ; Polytheism in such forms as were best adapted to the imagination of a highly polished people.

Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul

and his companions arrived at Thessalonica ; but in this city, as well as in Berea, their chief intercourse appears to have been with the Jews. The riot by which they were expelled from Thessalonica, though blindly kept up by the disorderly populace, was instigated by Jason, the chief of the Jewish community.

Having left his companions, Timotheus and Silas, at Berea, Paul arrived alone at Athens. At Athens, the central point and capital of the Greek philosophy and Heathen superstition, takes place the first public and direct conflict between Christianity and Paganism. Up to this time there is no account of any one of the apostles taking his station in the public street or market place, and addressing the general multitude. Their place of teaching had invariably been the synagogue of their nation, or, as at Philippi, the neighborhood of their customary place of worship. Here, however, Paul does not confine himself to the synagogue, or to the society of his countrymen and their proselytes. He takes his stand in the public market-place, which, in the reign of Augustus, had begun to be more frequented. In Athens, the appearance of a new public teacher was welcomed as promising some fresh intellectual excitement. Though the Athenians affected at first to treat Paul as an idle "babbler," and others supposed that he was about to introduce some new religious worship, which might endanger the supremacy of their own tutelary divinities, he is conveyed, not without respect, to a still more public and commodious place, from whence he may

explain his doctrines to a numerous assembly, without interruption. On the Areopagus the Christian leader takes his stand, surrounded on every side with whatever was noble, beautiful, and intellectual in the older world. It was in the midst of so many conflicting associations, that Paul stands forth to proclaim the lowly yet authoritative religion of Jesus of Nazareth. His audience comprised the representatives of the two prevailing sects, — the Stoics and Epicureans, with the populace, the worshippers of the established religion. In his discourse, the heads of which are related by St. Luke, he touches with singular felicity on the peculiar opinions of each class among his hearers. It is impossible not to examine with the utmost interest the whole course of this first full and public argument of Christianity against the Heathen religion and philosophy — it being perhaps the most extensively and permanently effective oration ever uttered by man. The opening of the speech is calm, temperate, conciliatory. The God whose attributes he came to unfold rose far above the popular notion; he could not be confined in altar or temple, or represented by any visible image. He was the universal father of mankind, even of the earth-born Athenians, who boasted that they were of an older race than the other families of man, and coeval with the world itself.

In the lofty and serene Deity, who disclaimed to dwell in the earthly temple, and needed nothing from the hand of man, the Epicurean might almost suppose he heard the language of his own teacher. But

the next sentence, which asserted the Providence of God as the active, creative energy — annihilated at once the government of blind chance, to which Epicurus ascribed the origin and preservation of the universe.

This Divine Providence was far different also from the stern and all-controlling necessity, the inexorable fatalism of the Stoic. The lessons of humility and conscious deficiency, the universal call to repentance, which were taught in the school of Christ, were utterly opposed to the principles of the Stoic, and the sentiments of his philosophy. The great Christian doctrine of the resurrection closed the speech of Paul; a doctrine received with mockery, perhaps, by his Epicurean hearers, with doubtful approval, probably, by the Stoic, with whose theory of the final destruction of the world by fire, and his tenet of future retribution, it might appear in some degree to harmonize. Some, however, became declared converts; among whom are particularly named Dionysius, a man of sufficient distinction to be a member of the famous court of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris, probably of considerable rank and influence.

At Athens, all this free discussion on topics relating to the religious and moral nature of man, and involving the authority of the existing religion, led to no disturbance. Polytheism reigned there in its utmost splendor; the temples were maintained with the highest pomp, and the substitution of Christianity could be effected only by a thorough and radical change in

public sentiment. Every image, from the living work of Phidias or Praxiteles to the rude and shapeless Hermes or Terminus, must become an unmeaning mass of wood or stone. With the Pagan, the whole of his religious observances fell under the unsparing proscription. In every city, town, or even village, there was a contest to be maintained not merely against the general system of Polytheism, but against the local and tutelary deity of the place. Every public spectacle, every procession, every civil or military duty, was a religious ceremonial. Though later, many of the usages of the heathen worship crept into the more gorgeous and imposing ceremonial of triumphant Christianity, though even many of the vulgar superstitions incorporated themselves with the sacred Christian Associations, all this reaction was long subsequent to the permanent establishment of the new religion. At first all was rigid and uncompromising hostility; doubts were entertained by the more scrupulous whether meat exposed to public sale in the market, but which might have formed part of a sacrifice, would not be dangerously polluting to a Christian. The apostle, though anxious to correct this sensitive scrupulousness, touches on the point with the utmost caution and delicacy. 1 Cor. 10: 25-31. The Jew's trembling apprehension of any thing approaching to idolatry, the concentration of his heart's whole devotion upon the One Almighty God, prepared him for the reception of Christianity. But the whole life of the heathen was pervaded by the spirit of Poly-

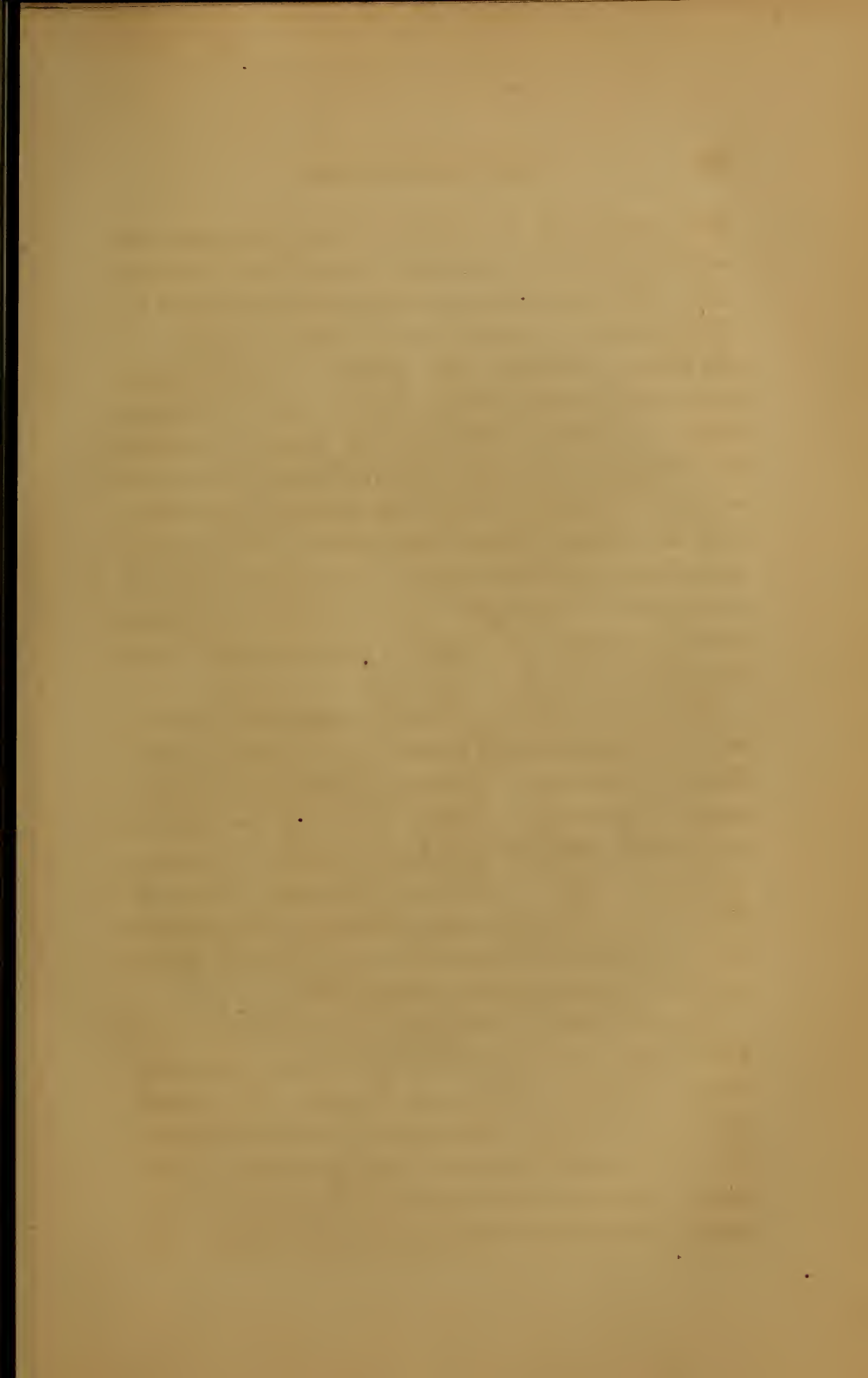
theism. It met him in every quarter, in every act and function of every day's business ; in the senate, which commenced its deliberations with sacrifice ; in the camp, the centre of which was a consecrated temple ; his domestic hearth was guarded by the ancestral gods of his family or tribe ; by land he travelled under the protection of one tutelar divinity, by sea of another ; the birth, the bridal, the funeral, had each its presiding divinity ; the very commonest household utensils were cast in mythological forms ; he could scarcely drink without being reminded of making a libation to the gods. Although Athens was the headquarters of Paganism, it was at the same time the place where Paganism most clearly betrayed its approaching dissolution.

From Athens the apostle passes to Corinth. Corinth was at that time the common emporium of the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire. The basis of the population was Roman, of very recent settlement. In no part of the Roman Empire were both the inhabitants and the travellers through the city so various and mingled ; nowhere, therefore, would a new religion spread with so much rapidity, and exercise so much influence, and at the same time excite so little observation, as in this perpetual influx and efflux of strangers. At Corinth, therefore, but for the hostility of his countrymen, the Christian apostle might, for even longer than the eighteen months which he passed in that city, have pursued his peaceful course. The open adoption of the new

faith by one of the chiefs of the synagogue, re-awakened the fierce animosity of the Jewish community. The cause was contemptuously dismissed by the proconsul of Achaia, as beneath the majesty of the Roman tribunal. The affair was openly treated as an unimportant sectarian dispute about the national faith of the Jews. The mild and popular character of Gallio, his connection with his brother Seneca, in whose philosophic writings the morality of heathenism had taken a higher tone than it ever assumed, unless perhaps, subsequently, in the works of Marcus Antoninus, excite regret that the religion of Christ was not brought to his notice in a manner more likely to enlist his attention.

The result of this trial was the peaceful establishment of Christianity in Corinth, where, though secure from the violence of the Jews, it was, however, constantly exposed by its situation to the intrusion of new comers, with different modifications of Christian opinions. Thus eventful was the second journey of Paul. In many of the most flourishing and populous cities of Greece communities were formed, which were continually enlarging their sphere.

The third journey, starting from the head-quarters of Christianity, Antioch, led Paul again through the same regions of Asia, Galatia, and Phrygia. But instead of crossing over into Macedonia, he proceeded along the west of Asia Minor to the important city of Ephesus. Ephesus at that time might be regarded as the capital, the chief mercantile city of Asia Minor. Its





PAUL AT EPHESUS.

celebrated temple was one of the most splendid models of Grecian architecture ; the image of the goddess retained the symbolic form of the old Eastern nature-worship. It was one of the great schools of magic. Paul resided in Ephesus two years, during which the rapid extension of Christianity was accelerated by many wonderful cures. He preached at first in the synagogue ; but this being productive of much wrangling, he established an independent Christian church. He also preached in the neighboring cities as well as at Ephesus ; and all the country of Asia, properly so called, was thereby furnished with an opportunity of becoming well acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion. He wrought many wonderful cures ; even when the handkerchiefs and aprons of the sick were brought to him, they were healed of their diseases, and some of the persons relieved by him were demoniacs.

Some Jewish exorcists, seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, perceiving this, and thinking there must be some powerful charm in the invocation of the name of Jesus, repeated it over a demoniac, saying, " We adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preaches." But the madman, not being restored to his right mind, though understanding the words they used, insulted them, and fell violently upon them, saying, " Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye ? " and they did not escape without wounds. This event attracted much notice in the town and country. The success of Paul and the failure of the exorcists added

to his reputation, and were the means of gaining him many converts. At the same time the inefficacy of all magical rites was so apparent, that great numbers brought their books containing such secrets, and burned them publicly; and though they might have been sold for fifty thousand pieces of silver (equal, probably, to eight hundred pounds), they chose to make this sacrifice, rather than contribute to the spread of such wicked and mischievous arts by the sale of them. It was at this period that Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians. The new faith made such rapid progress, that those who were dependent upon the heathen religion for their subsistence began to tremble. A collision for the first time took place with the interests of that numerous class who were directly connected with the support of the reigning Polytheism. There was a common article of trade, a model or shrine of silver representing the temple, which was kept as a memorial, or, perhaps, as endowed with some sacred and talismanic power. The sale of these articles was gradually falling off, when the artisans, at the instigation of a certain Demetrius, raised a violent popular tumult, and spread the exciting cry that the worship of Diana was in danger. The whole city rung with the shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Two of Paul's companions were seized and dragged into the public theatre, the place where in many cities the public business was transacted. He was eager to address the multitude, but was restrained by the prudence of his friends, among whom were

some of the most eminent men of the province. The tumult was finally allayed ; but Paul seems to have thought it prudent to withdraw from the excited city, and to pursue his former line of travel into Macedonia and Greece.

From Ephesus, accordingly, we trace his course through Macedonia to Corinth, from which place he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. The main object of that celebrated epistle was to annul forever the claim of the Mosaic law to a perpetual authority ; to exhibit Christianity as a part of the providential design in the moral history of man, while Judaism was but a temporary institution, unequal to the great end of revealing the immortality of mankind, and altogether repealed by the more wide and universal system which comprehended in its beneficent purposes the whole human race.

Paul's circuit through Macedonia, Greece, back to Philippi, down the Ægean to Miletus, by Coos, Rhodes, Patara, to Tyre, and thence to Cæsarea, brought him again near to Jerusalem, where he had determined to appear at the feast of Pentecost. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends and the prophetic denunciation of his imprisonment by a certain Agabus, he adhered to his resolution of confronting the whole hostile nation at their great annual assembly. This Agabus was the same who had foretold the famine in the time of Claudius. In imitation of the ancient prophets, who often expressed themselves by symbols, he caused himself to be bound hand and foot with

Paul's girdle, and declared that in the same manner would the Jews of Jerusalem bind the owner of that girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. Thereupon all the company earnestly entreated Paul that he would not proceed to Jerusalem; but with a noble magnanimity he replied, that he was ready not only to be bound but also to suffer death at Jerusalem in the cause of Christ. After this they used no further entreaties, but with the same resignation said, "The will of God be done." Being joined by Mnason, an old disciple belonging to Cyprus, and other Christians of Cæsarea, they went together to Jerusalem where their fellow Christians received them with joy. Acts, 21 : 17. This was at Pentecost, A.D. 58, eight years before the commencement of the famous Jewish war.

The motive of Paul in visiting Jerusalem was, probably, to allay the jealousy of his countrymen. He complied with the advice of his friends, and instead of appearing in the Temple as an ordinary worshipper, that he might show his own personal reverence for the usages of his ancestors, he united himself to four persons who had taken upon them a vow, a deliberate acknowledgment not merely of respect for, but of zeal beyond, the law. His person, however, was too well known to the Asiatic Jews not to be recognized; a sudden outcry was raised against him; he was charged with having violated the sanctity of the holy precincts by bringing Greeks into the holy temple. He was dragged out into the court of the Gen-

tiles, the doors closed, and, but for the prompt interference of the Roman guard, he would have fallen a victim to the popular fury. The ease and purity of style with which Paul addressed the Roman commander in Greek, and the commanding serenity of his demeanor, so far influenced Lysias in his favor, that he was permitted by him to address the multitude. Paul spoke the language of the country, and was listened to without interruption while giving an account of his conversion to the new religion; but when he broached the dangerous subject of the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of Christianity, the popular frenzy broke out again with such violence as could scarcely be controlled by the Roman military. He was led away into the court of the fortress, and the commander, who probably understood nothing of his address, but only saw that instead of allaying it increased the turbulence of the people, gave orders that he should suffer the usual punishment of scourging with rods, in order that he might be forced to confess the real origin of the disturbance. But this proceeding was arrested by Paul's claiming the privilege of a Roman citizen. The soldiers engaged in scourging him recoiled in terror, and he was at once released from punishment. The next morning he was brought before the Sanhedrim, and there made a solemn protestation of his innocence; but an angry tumult was aroused, and the Roman commander again withdrew him into the citadel for safety; but he was not secure even there. A conspiracy was formed

against his life ; but the plot being discovered by his nephew, he was sent under a strong guard to Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman provincial governor, the dissolute and tyrannical Felix.

The defence of Paul against the charge of sedition, of innovation, and the profanation of the Temple, was successful with Felix, who was well acquainted with the Jewish character, and by no means disposed to gratify their passions and animosities. The charge therefore was dismissed. Paul, though not set at liberty, was allowed free intercourse with his Christian brethren ; Felix himself even condescended to hear, and heard not without emotion, the sublime moral doctrines he taught, which were so much at variance with his own unjust and adulterous life.

For the last two years of the administration of Felix, Paul remained a prisoner, and Felix, at his departure, being well aware that accusations were lodged against himself by the representatives of the Jewish nation, endeavored to propitiate them by leaving Paul still in custody. Before the new governor, Porcius Festus, a man of rigid justice, and less acquainted with the Jewish character, their charges were renewed with the utmost acrimony. Festus proposed to remove the prisoner to Jerusalem, and try him there ; but Paul persisted in his appeal to Cæsar. To this appeal from a Roman citizen the governor could not refuse his assent.

Soon after this, Festus was visited by king Agrippa the younger, who had succeeded his father. He

appeared in great pomp at Cæsarea, with his sister Bernice. To these guests the governor related the case of his prisoner, which so much excited the curiosity of Agrippa that he expressed a wish to hear Paul himself. Festus consented the more willingly, as, being obliged to send him to Rome, and of course to give some account of him, he hoped that by means of this audience he should be able to draw up a more satisfactory account than he otherwise could. Paul, on being brought forward, expressed much satisfaction at having an opportunity of explaining his doctrine before a Jewish prince, who was acquainted with those prophecies to which he should have occasion to refer, and proceeded to give an account of himself, and especially of his miraculous conversion to Christianity. Festus (who being a Heathen was not disposed to give credence to accounts of miracles, and who probably entertained that contempt for the religion of the Jews which was prevalent among persons of rank who had never investigated its character) did not hesitate to declare that Paul was certainly out of his senses, and that much study had disordered his mind. But Agrippa, who was a believer in miracles, could not so readily deny the truth of his statements, and in view of all the circumstances narrated was constrained to acknowledge that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. To this, Paul with great presence of mind and much earnestness replied, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these

bonds." With this the conference closed; and it was admitted by them all that he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to the emperor. He was thereupon sent to Rome, under the custody of a centurion named Julius, who treated him with great kindness and civility, permitting him, when they came to Sidon, to land and visit his friends.

His voyage strikingly depicts the precarious navigation of the Mediterranean at that time. In Acts, 27: 4, it is said, "we sailed under Cyprus;" that is, they probably sailed along the southern coast of the island, and thus sheltered themselves from the unfavorable winds. "The ancient navigators, ignorant of the mariner's compass and many other means and resources now well understood and adopted, were accustomed to creep along the shores, as much as possible within sight of land. The wonderful discoveries and improvements of later times have taught that the open sea is the safest path for the mariner." Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul. Touching at Myra, a city of Lycia, they found there a ship from Alexandria, bound to Italy, in which they embarked. The immense population of Rome were supplied with grain, in a great measure, from Egypt; the fertility of the Nile rendered that country the granary of the empire. They encountered difficulty in passing the island of Crete, and not long after were caught in a tempestuous whirlwind; the sailors lost all control of the ship, and after passing the island of Clanda they were obliged to cast the freight overboard. As

they had neither sun nor stars to guide them, they abandoned all hope of being saved. Paul, however, exhorted them to be of good cheer, telling them that he had been told in a vision that their lives would be preserved, although the ship would be lost; and so it proved; the crew and passengers with difficulty reached the shore on the island of Melita, the ship being stranded and dashed to pieces.

On this island they were received with hospitality, and Paul performed some remarkable miracles. As he had procured a bundle of sticks, and was laying them on the fire, a viper, which had not been perceived among them, feeling the heat, fastened on his hand; a circumstance which led the natives to imagine that he was a murderer, who, though he had not perished in the shipwreck, was now overtaken by divine vengeance. But when he shook it off without receiving any harm, they changed their opinion and exclaimed that he was a god. Many sick persons were brought to him and were miraculously healed.

Having wintered in Melita, Paul and his company proceeded early in the spring, A.D. 61, towards Rome, calling at Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli, at which last place Paul found some Christian brethren; and at Appii forum and the Three Taverns he was met by some Christians from Rome, and was by them accompanied thither.

The apostle now surveys the strength and encounters the hostility of Paganism, from the metropolis of the world. Arrived at the place of his destination,

he was delivered by the centurion to the custody of a soldier, who was chained to him; but in other respects he was at liberty, and thus he continued for two whole years, occupying a house which he hired. When he had been in Rome three days, he sent for the chief men among the Jews, and gave them an account of himself, and of the cause of his being sent thither. A day was fixed for a public hearing, the result of which was, that some of the Jews, as in other places, became converts to Christianity, while others remained obstinate in their unbelief. Paul thereupon informed them that he should thenceforth apply himself to preaching to the Gentiles.

We have no account of Paul's trial before the emperor; but it may be collected from the epistles which he wrote from Rome, that though his friends deserted him upon that occasion, he was enabled to deliver himself with great boldness, and that many persons, either from what he said on that occasion, or at other times, became converts to Christianity, and among them were some of the emperor's family. He was probably reserved for a further hearing, and after two years he was set at liberty.

At Rome, Paul, having leisure to write as well as to preach, wrote several valuable epistles, as that to the Ephesians, a second to Timothy, to the Philip-pians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon. He also wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, a little before, or soon after, his release. There is a peculiar dignity and sublimity in these epistles written from Rome.

Paul probably felt that he was near the close of his life, and therefore he wrote with that energy with which a man naturally accompanies his last admonitions to those whom he loves. In the epistle to Timothy, he urges him to come to him before winter; which Timothy probably did, as in the other epistles from Rome Timothy's name is joined with Paul's in salutations from that place. The Christians at Philippi were probably wealthy, and they were proportionately generous; they contributed largely to the apostle's support, when other churches were inattentive to his wants. They had not been unmindful of his situation now that he was a prisoner at Rome, but had sent Epaphroditus, one of their body, with a liberal contribution for his relief. This he gratefully acknowledges in his epistle, the principal object of which, as of many others, is to exhort those to whom he writes to recommend their Christian profession by a suitable life and conversation, and to resist the attempts of the Judaizing teachers to sow divisions among them. The manner in which he speaks of his own situation, and the satisfaction he expresses in all that he had done and suffered for the sake of the gospel, is equally forcible. He appears, when he wrote this epistle, to have entertained the hope of being set at liberty; but as to himself, he says, it was a matter of indifference whether he lived or died, provided his life or death might be subservient, as he was confident either of them would be, to the propagation of the gospel.

Philemon was a citizen of Colosse, whose slave

Onesimus had run away from him, and probably robbed him, but who coming to Rome while Paul was there, and hearing him preach, not only became a convert to Christianity, but made himself useful to the apostle. Being, without doubt, convinced by the arguments of the apostle, and the secret promptings of his own conscience, that it was his duty to make reparation for the wrong he had done in appropriating to his own use the goods of his master, he was induced to return to him ; and for the purpose of procuring for him a more favorable reception than he might otherwise meet with, Paul made him the bearer of the epistle to Philemon. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to show the superiority of the Christian dispensation over the Jewish, in a variety of respects ; asserting that whatever there was that was much esteemed in the institutions of Moses, there was something of the same nature, and superior in kind, in the gospel of Christ.

From the researches of a recent writer upon the Life and Writings of Paul, we gather the following account of his subsequent history :—

“ Clement, the disciple of St. Paul, mentioned in Philippians, asserts that Paul previous to his martyrdom had taught throughout the whole Roman Empire both in the East and in the West. We learn, therefore, that the trial of St. Paul before Nero resulted in his acquittal, and that after regaining his liberty he travelled first through Macedonia, visiting the Philippian church, and for the first time the church at Colosse, Laodicea, and others in that region, and then

hastened on to Ephesus. Having accomplished the object of his visit to Asia Minor, he was at length enabled to undertake his long meditated journey to Spain. There he remained about two years, establishing Christian churches along the Spanish coast, and then returned to Ephesus. St. Paul's grief and indignation were aroused on revisiting that city, at beholding the commencement of those heresies which convulsed the church in the succeeding century.

The city Nicopolis, in Epirus, which was chosen as the last scene of the apostle's labors, before his final imprisonment, is celebrated also as being founded by Augustus, as a permanent memorial of the battle and victory of Actium, as it stood upon the site of the camp occupied by his land forces. To people this city, Augustus uprooted the neighboring mountaineers from their native hills, forcing them by his arbitrary compulsion from their healthy hills to this low and swampy plain.

St. Paul was arrested at this place about midwinter, and immediately sent to Rome. In this melancholy journey he had but few friends to cheer him. Luke remained faithful; he accompanied his master once more over the winter sea, and shared the danger of his imprisonment at Rome. This imprisonment was evidently more severe than it had been five years before. Now, he is not only chained, but treated as a malefactor. His friends, indeed, are still suffered to visit him in his confinement, but we hear nothing of his preaching. It is dangerous to seek his prison;

so perilous to show any public sympathy with him, that no Christian ventures to stand by him in the court of justice. Subsequent to his first imprisonment in Rome had occurred the immense conflagration which consumed about half the city, and which was the act of Nero himself. But he, wishing to avert the rage of the populace, had declared it the act of the votaries of the new religion. Hence had ensued that terrible imperial persecution which caused the most cruel sufferings and death of a vast multitude of Christians. One article of accusation against Paul appears to have been the serious charge of having instigated the Roman Christians to their supposed act of incendiarism, before his last departure from the capital. Probably, no long time elapsed after St. Paul's arrival, before the hearing of his cause with regard to this first charge came on, for on this occasion he was not to be tried by the emperor in person. We have an account of this trial from St. Paul's own pen. He writes thus to Timothy, immediately after: "When I was first heard in defence, no man stood by me, but all forsook me. I pray that it be not laid to their charge."

No advocate would venture to plead the apostle's cause, no influential friend to appear as his supporter, and deprecate, according to ancient usage, the severity of the sentence. His earthly friends had forsaken him, but his Heavenly Friend stood by him. He spoke of Jesus, of his death and his resurrection, so that all the Heathen multitude might hear; for he

appears to have spoken before a crowded audience. He successfully defended himself from the charge brought against him of conspiracy with the incendiaries of Rome.

He was delivered from the imminent peril, and saved from an ignominious and painful death, from which even the privilege of a Roman citizen might not have exempted him, had he been convicted on such a charge. He was now remanded to prison to wait for the second stage of his trial. It seems that he himself did not expect this to come on so soon as it really did ; or, at any rate, he did not think the final decision would be given till the following winter, whereas it actually took place about midsummer. The feelings with which he awaited the consummation, he has himself expressed in that sublime strain of triumphant hope which is familiar to the memory of every Christian, and which has nerved the hearts of a thousand martyrs ; "I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day." Such were the blessed and glorious hopes by which he was sustained. Yet, even in these last hours, he clung to the fellowship of early years ; the faithful companionship of Luke still consoled him in the weary hours of constrained inactivity, which, to a temper like his, must have made the most painful part of his imprisonment. Luke was

the only one of his habitual attendants who now remained to minister to him ; his other companions, as we have seen, had left him, probably before his arrival at Rome. But one friend from Asia, Onesiphorus, had diligently sought him out, and visited him in prison, undeterred by fear of danger or shame. And there were others, some of them high in station, who came to receive from the chained malefactor blessings infinitely greater than all the favors of the emperor of the world. But, however he may have valued these more recent friends, their society could not console him for the absence of one far dearer to him ; he longed to see once more the face of Timothy, his beloved son.

The disciple who had so long ministered to him with filial affection, might still, he hoped, arrive in time to receive his parting words, and be with him in his dying hour. But Timothy was far distant, in Asia Minor ; and although he wrote requesting him to come with all speed to Rome, yet he felt that there was a great probability that he might arrive too late. Lest he should be prevented from giving him his last instructions face to face, he impresses upon him, with the earnestness of a dying man, the various duties of his ecclesiastical office, and especially that of opposing the heresies which then threatened to destroy the very essence of Christianity.

This was, probably the last epistle which was written by the apostle Paul before his martyrdom.

It is probable that Timothy reached Rome in time

to receive the parting commands of the dying apostle, that he not only fearlessly obeyed his master's summons, but that he actually shared his chains, though he escaped his fate; for in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is stated that Timothy had been liberated from his imprisonment. Nero's death took place immediately after that of St. Paul, which accounts for the escape of Timothy.

We have no record of the final stage of the trial of St. Paul, nor the precise nature of the second charge made against him. We only know that his trial resulted in a sentence of capital punishment. The privileges of Roman citizenship exempted St. Paul from the ignominious death of lingering torture, which had been lately inflicted on so many of his brethren. He was to die by decapitation, and he was led out to execution beyond the city walls; as it was the custom to send prisoners whose death might attract too much notice in Rome, to some distance from the city, under a military escort, for execution. When that heroic soul was released from that feeble body, weeping friends took up his corpse, and carried it for burial to those subterranean labyrinths, where, through many ages of oppression, the persecuted Church found refuge for the living, and sepulchres for the dead. Thus died the apostle, the prophet, and the martyr; thenceforth, among the noble army of martyrs, among the glorious company of the apostles, the name of Paul of Tarsus has stood preëminent.

The following remarks from a writer in a late

Review, present a just view of the importance of that portion of the history of the early Christian Church exhibited in the life and writings of St. Paul, and the immense influence that the life of this wonderful man exercised upon the world at that period : —

“The supreme agency of Paul in shaping the destinies of early Christianity, is an agency which emerges into ever clearer and more impressive relief, as criticism demonstrates more and more the aspects and movements of the apostolic time. What was the gospel preached in the first ten years which succeeded the birth of Christ? It was evidently and eminently a Hebrew gospel. Read the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles ; note the expositions given by Peter to the Sanhedrim and to the people of Jerusalem, of Christianity, as he and his colleagues understood it. The burden of his preaching is, that Christ is the son of David, sprung from the royal stock of Israel, foretold by their national prophets, and therefore entitled of right to be their king ; that he would soon re-appear on the earth for that purpose, and take possession of the throne of his fathers ; that all who repented of their sins, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, should be rescued from impending doom, and have their place and part in the new kingdom, and that all who would not receive him should be destroyed. ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of

all things.' This was the first Christian gospel. It was a national, Hebrew gospel.

"But the purpose of the Christian dispensation was not to be accomplished in that way. Christianity meant something more than the regeneration of the Jewish people. A great step remained to be taken before the gospel could fairly enter on its destined career. It must first disengage itself from the narrow confinement of Judaism, and go forth as a universal religion, intended equally for all kindreds and nations. It must be understood that in Christ there is neither Jew, nor Greek, nor barbarian ; that all national limitations and distinctions were merged and dissolved in the Christian confession. 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism;' that the promised kingdom was not for the Jewish nation only, but for all mankind. So far as it depended on the Galilean disciples, Christianity would have remained a form of Judaism to this day. In due season Providence sent a teacher competent to unfold the gospel, to extend its mission, to divest it of its nationality, and diffuse it through the world. That teacher was Paul, a Jew by nation but not by birth, a native of Asia Minor, and a Roman citizen. He was master of the Greek language, at that time the language of the civilized world. He had imbibed the better part of the culture of his time ; and that was the most cultivated period of ancient history. He was at once a thinker and an actor, a workingman and a philosopher, a man of visions and a man of deeds. This stranger becomes the chief interpreter of Christ to

the nations. Henceforth he becomes the foremost figure upon the stage in the Apostolic Church, and occupies it almost to the exclusion of the other apostles. Jerusalem with its doings, which before had constituted the central interest, fades far into the background. The scene shifts and enlarges with every act. Asia Minor, with its broad territories and populous cities, passes rapidly across the field of vision, and finally, for the first time in Bible history, Europe, still fresh and young, — wide-eyed nurse of letters and arts, — becomes visible in the horizon, draws rapidly nearer, and presently occupies the foreground of the narrative. We have the apostle's own word, that he did not after his conversion 'straightway preach Christ in the synagogues;' that he 'conferred not with flesh and blood,' but went into Arabia, that is, into the desert, in strict seclusion, there to meditate and mature his convictions and his views. He would not rashly take upon himself the work of an evangelist. This gospel must be no second-hand doctrine. He insists on his own original authority. 'Paul an apostle, not by man nor of men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.' His gospel was his own; matured and perfected by independent thought, or rather, as he claimed, received by direct and independent communication with the mind of Christ. It differed essentially in tone and spirit from the gospel originally preached at Jerusalem, the gospel of the Galileans. Its leading characteristics, as compared with that, were liberty, universality, and spirituality;

that is, emancipation from the ceremonial law, and the spiritual unity of all men as one family in Christ, instead of a political commonwealth of which Christ was to be the visible head.

This, then, is the second gospel of the Christian Church, and marks a new and important era in the history of Christianity. It is not easy for us to estimate the magnitude and the difficulty of the revolution accomplished by St. Paul, by which Christianity passed from the tutelage of Judaism to freedom and universality. The nearest approach we can make to it in conception is, to suppose the mosque of Omar, in modern Jerusalem, thrown open by the voluntary act of the Moslem authorities to Jews and Christians; or, what is equally extravagant, to suppose the Roman Catholic Church to give up her traditions, her infallibility, her keys, and to know no distinction henceforth between Roman and Protestant; or yet again, to suppose an amendment of the Constitution of the United States, by which women should partake of the elective franchise, and be admitted to seats in the national congress. Neither of these suppositions involves a greater change, a wider departure from ancient custom, than the passage from Judaism to the gospel preached by Paul."

The earliest laborers in this mighty vineyard, one by one passed away to their reward, many of them receiving, at the fire and the stake, a quick release from their labors. Peter the apostle, the Scripture leaves at Antioch, probably about the year 50. After

this he was employed in spreading the gospel principally among the Jews scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. His two epistles were directed to the Hebrew converts of these countries. He was not so acceptable as Paul among the Gentiles, though more so among his own countrymen. It is supposed that he visited Rome about the year 63. He suffered crucifixion under Nero, with his head downward, because he felt himself unworthy to suffer in the same way in which his divine master had suffered. Peter's wife had suffered martyrdom a little before himself. He saw her led to death, and was enabled to rejoice in her steadfastness to the Christian faith. Addressing her by name, he exhorted her to be comforted by remembering the Lord.

Of the apostle John a few valuable fragments remain, and only a few have been collected. He was present at the council of Jerusalem, which was held about the year 50, nor is it probable that he left the land of Palestine before that time. Asia Minor was the great field of his labors, particularly Ephesus, the care of which church remained with him after the death of the other apostles. This gentle and affectionate Christian lived nearly a hundred years, and was remarkable for the tenderness of his feelings and love to all men. He was banished by Domitian, who succeeded Nero, to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse. After the death of Domitian he returned from Pat-

mos, and governed the Asiatic churches. At the request of the bishops he went to the neighboring churches to ordain pastors and regulate the congregations. At one place upon his tour he met with a very interesting young man, whom he recommended to the care of a particular pastor. The young man was baptized, and for a while he lived like a Christian. But after a time he grew idle, intemperate, and dishonest, and at length became captain of a band of robbers. Some time after, John had occasion to inquire of the pastor respecting this young man, and heard of his apostacy, and that he dwelt in a mountain opposite the church. The venerable apostle, full of love to God and zeal for the souls of men, went to the plain and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers; "Bring me," said he, "to your captain." The latter, when he saw him coming, recognized the apostle, and filled with shame fled. But the aged disciple followed him, crying, "My son, why flyest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? Fear not; as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ hath sent me." Hearing this, the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed and pleaded with him, and at last brought him back to the society of Christians; nor did he leave him until he found him fully restored to his former standing.

There is another tradition related of this venerable teacher. When he had become so aged as to be unable to preach in public, his constantly repeated

exhortation was, "Children, love one another ;" thus intimating that the Christian religion universally breathed tenderness, peace, and good will.

James the Greater was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom. He was the son of Zebedee. He fell a sacrifice to Herod Agrippa's desire to please the Jews, who were so hostile to Christianity. Milner the historian records of him the following anecdote: "The man who had drawn him before the tribunal, when he saw the readiness with which he submitted to martyrdom, by one of those sudden conversions not unfrequent amid the remarkable outpourings of the Spirit, was himself turned to God, and confessed Christ with cheerfulness. They were both led to execution, and on the way the accuser requested the apostle's forgiveness, which he soon obtained. James turning to him answered, 'Peace be to thee,' and kissed him ; and they were beheaded together."

The other James was the pastor of the church at Jerusalem. He was preserved until a much later period. His martyrdom took place about the year 62. His epistle was published a little before his death. The name of Just was given him on account of his consistent life, his innocence and integrity. He humored the prejudices of the Jews, submitted to many Jewish customs, and thus became a much greater favorite than Paul. It is reported that he was thrown by the Jews from the battlements of the temple, and then dispatched with a fuller's club, while on his knees, and in the act of praying for his murderers.

Of Barnabas, the fellow-laborer of Paul, nothing is known except what is recorded in Acts. "There," says one, "we have an honorable encomium upon his character, and a particular description of his joint labors with Paul."

Luke was a physician, and resided at Antioch, the capital of Syria. Whether he was a Jew or Gentile, we do not know; or whether he was converted through the instrumentality of Paul's preaching at Antioch; or whether he first met him at Troas. His notice of himself as Paul's companion first began at Troas. After that he is often spoken of as accompanying him in various journeys; of course he was an eye-witness of many events which he relates. He appears to have retired into Greece, after Paul's first dismissal by the Roman emperor, and there to have written the gospel which bears his name, and the Book of Acts, about the year 63 or 64.

Mark was sister's son to Barnabas, the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem. He was probably brought 'up in Christianity from early life. We are told that Mark was one of those who were offended at the words of Christ, recorded in the sixth chapter of John, and then forsook him; but was afterwards recovered by means of Peter. After our Lord's ascension, Mark for a time attended his uncle Barnabas with Paul, but afterwards left them, and returned to Jerusalem. Paul appears to have been displeased with him about this time, but probably his character improved, for he subsequently speaks of him as hav-

ing been profitable to him in the ministry ; for he seems to have been with him in his imprisonment in 62. It is uncertain when he came into Egypt, though it is generally conceded that he founded the church in Alexandria, and that he was buried there.

The North of Africa was, at this time, a highly civilized region. In all its principal places the Christian faith was well planted. After the destruction of the Jewish nation had almost ruined the city of Jerusalem, the splendid city of Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, became for a long period a central point of importance to the Christian Church. It was, next to Rome, the largest city in the world, and the commerce of the East and of the Mediterranean made it the largest commercial city. But it was particularly distinguished as a university city, for the great advantages which it offered to the learned, and the inducements it held out to scholars. Teachers and scholars flocked thither from Rome, from Greece, and indeed from all parts of the world. There was no place where so many nations were represented among the people. The commerce of the place increased the facilities of access to it, and created the wealth which endowed its museums and libraries. It was in those days such as Paris is in these, although without any political influence or any political interests. People of leisure congregated there to be amused ; others to trade ; and others to study. It was at this celebrated city that Mark probably wrote his gospel. The style of this gospel is so simple, it avoids specu-

lation so entirely, dealing wholly in narrative, that the suggestion has been made that it was prepared for young people particularly. It is certain that it contains all the narratives of Jesus's dealing with children, and that this can be said of no one of the other gospels. The school of St. Mark was known as the Catechetical School, or the school for those who were advancing from the elements of Christian faith; as we should say, the school of the catechized. After St. Mark's death it was continued by a number of distinguished Christian teachers, and thus hearers and teachers gradually came to regard Alexandria as a centre of Christian learning.

St. Thomas preached in the same portion of the world as St. Peter. Not only the Medes and Persians, but the warlike Parthians, and the rude Bactrians, heard from his lips the gospel; and so he wandered on until he came to India—to those shores too distant even to have seen the eagles of Imperial Rome. An early writer tells us, that at first he shrank from visiting that land on account of the rudeness of its people, till a vision bade him go on, for it was his Lord's work; and success crowned his efforts. For ages the church he founded lived on, cut off from the rest of the Christian world, and utterly unknown. At length, in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese visited the court of Malabar, and found to their surprise a Christian nation, with more than a hundred churches. "These churches," said they, "belong to the Pope."—"Who is the Pope?"

replied the natives; "We never heard of him." They refused to subscribe to the tenets of the Church of Rome, or to adopt her form of service. The Inquisition was thereupon established at Goa; persecution invaded these tranquil churches, and some of their clergy were seized and sentenced to death as heretics. At a synod over which the Roman archbishop Menezes presided, they were accused of the following practices and opinions: That they had allowed marriage; that they acknowledged but two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and that they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in Purgatory. These heretical opinions they were required to abjure. The churches on the sea-coast were thus compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, but they refused to pray in Latin and insisted on retaining their own language and liturgy. "This point," they said, "they would only give up with their lives." The Pope, therefore, compromised with them, and they retain their Syriac language, and have a Syriac college to this day. These are called the Syro-Roman Churches, and are principally situated on the sea-coast. The churches in the interior, however, would not yield to Rome. They hid their books, proclaimed eternal war against the Inquisition, and fled to the mountains, where they sought the protection of the native princes, who had always been proud of their alliance. Thus two centuries more passed by, during which time no information was received of these Christians in the interior, until the very

fact of their existence began to be doubted. At length, in 1806, they were again discovered by Dr. Buchanan, in his missionary travels. He found them as they were described by the Portuguese, preserving their purity and faith in the seclusion of the wilderness. It was, too, a wide-spread church. "I have now ascertained," writes Buchanan, "that there are upwards of two hundred thousand Christians in the south of India, besides the Syrians, who speak the Malabar language." Such are "the Christians of St. Thomas;" and thus deeply did he plant the faith among these crowded millions. To this day it exists, and they who claim him as their spiritual father still preserve traditions of his ministry, and point to the place of his martyrdom and grave.

Nathaniel, who is sometimes called Bartholomew, departed to the eastern shore of the Red Sea, where many of his countrymen, after desolation had swept over the city of their fathers, took refuge in the quiet region of Arabia Felix. There, secluded from the world, and enjoying all that nature in her richest prodigality could pour around them, they might learn to forget the sorrows which had overwhelmed their land. There, too, those who had adopted the new faith, could live in the public profession of their creed unmolested by the narrow bigotry of their countrymen who still clung to the ancient covenant. Thus the wild Arabian tribes which had never bowed to mortal man, were taught by this apostle to take upon them the yoke of the humble Galilean. From thence he

went into Lycaonia, whose people, St. Chrysostom tells us, he instructed and trained up in the Christian discipline. At last he travelled on to Armenia the great, and there this "Israelite in whom was no guile" closed his earthly wanderings.

To St. Philip was committed the task of founding the Church among the Phrygians; a duty most difficult to perform, because there, through all the days of their Paganism, the religious emotions, when not entirely dormant, seem to have exhibited themselves in the wildest excitement.

Egypt, as has been stated, received the gospel from St. Mark. The north of Africa claims St. Simon as its apostle, and nowhere does the new religion seem to have taken deeper root or been more deeply riveted in the minds of the people. The religion of ancient Carthage had perished with the city, and the inhabitants had no sympathy with the dreamy mysticism of the East; every thing about them was earnest and practical. They seized with eagerness on the grand truths of Christianity; there was something in its lofty revelations which accorded well with the genius of those high-wrought spirits of the tropics; and in every page they wrote, and in every conflict in which they engaged for their faith, we seem to trace the influence of their burning climate. The land now so thinly peopled was then crowded with teeming millions; and thousands of churches arose, where, in our day, the Moslem's prayers are sounding morning and evening. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch

by Philip the deacon, carried the influence of Christianity to the court of Candace, Queen of Meroe. Tradition tells us that her treasurer, on his return, unfolded to her riches greater than those of this world which she had committed to his care ; and then, by her permission, he propagated the faith throughout Ethiopia, until meeting with St. Matthew, the apostle, by their joint endeavors idolatry was expelled from the country. Thus, even in the first age, many a wild and mysterious land had its apostle, who bequeathed to it the remembrance of his spiritual triumphs and his cruel death.

It is difficult to realize the severe contest which Christianity waged with Judaism, with barbarism, and with that beautiful classical mythology which was nowhere so powerful as under the protection of Pagan Rome.

We should become acquainted with those peculiar features of Judaism which so enlisted all the feelings and prejudices of its followers, and rendered them so deaf to every argument brought against it. One of these was the exclusive nature of its rites. The Jews felt that they occupied a peculiar position in the world ; that God had selected them to be the special guardians of his truth ; and that whenever they wandered from it, retribution followed in their steps. With the Jew alone the Divine Unity was the very groundwork of his creed, and a truth distinctly recognized by every class, from the learned Rabbi in the courts of the sanctuary, to the humblest vine dresser on the

hills of Hebron. Alone among all the nations of the earth, their temple held no "graven image." They were withdrawn from the rest of their fellow beings by isolating themselves amidst a multitude of rites and ceremonies. And how much there was to enlist the attachment of the worshippers. Solemn as were the sanctions of their faith, there was much in its festivals which was joyous, and calculated to brighten the chain of brotherhood which linked together their distant tribes. See them in the autumn when, the vintage over, the feast of Tabernacles called them to rejoice ! When the gardens and fields had begun to assume the sear and yellow hue of the declining year, the palm, the fir, the myrtle, and the pomegranate were compelled to yield their more durable foliage ; and when the evening star appeared in heaven above the western sea, every family, after the customary ablutions, left its dwelling to occupy its tabernacle, thus commemorating the years their fathers dwelt in tents during their passage through the wilderness. The inhabitants of Jerusalem beheld at once thousands of lamps sparkling on the Mount of Olives, in the vale of Kedron, and on the roofs of the houses in their city. The gentle breeze which stirred the leaves of their bowers, brought on its wings the sounds of festivity and mutual congratulations, as they echoed on every side amidst the music of the harp and cymbal. It was a season of universal rejoicing ; and each year, as the sacred festival came round, renewed the scene witnessed at its first celebration after the captivity.

Still more striking was the yearly gathering of the people at Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. To the hill of God they turned with gladness as this solemn festival drew nigh. It was not the simultaneous moving of the population of a single country, — not even the gathered worshippers from each district and village of Palestine, — but the confluence of countless multitudes of pilgrims from every quarter of the world; for the dispersed Jews had planted their law in its remotest extremities, and all its proselytes, at least once in their lives, presented themselves to pay their homage at that temple which was to them the only earthly shrine of their faith. As the feast drew nigh, the highways which led to the Holy City were filled as by one living torrent; and Josephus, from the number of paschal lambs sacrificed on one of those solemn occasions, has estimated the pilgrims and residents at Jerusalem at nearly three millions.

The rolling onward of countless and gathering masses of population to some of the temples in India, the caravans from all quarters of the Eastern World which assemble at Mecca during the Holy Season, do not surpass, perhaps scarcely equal, the sudden, simultaneous confluence towards the capital of Judea at the time of the Passover. It was indeed a magnificent spectacle, well calculated to awaken in the breast of the Jew every feeling of national pride, both for his country and his faith.

The sun is rising over Hebron, its earliest beams lighting up the lofty palm-trees at the gates, when every family is in motion, for the procession is about to set forth to Jerusalem. The priests and elders head the train; the people follow, interspersed with their camels and beasts of burden; while the Levites, with their instruments of music, are distributed among the multitude. At length the signal is given, and as they set forth together they raise the Psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord!" etc. It rises like "the noise of many waters," for a soul-felt exultation animates the voices of old and young. It was on such occasions only that the true sublimity and beauty of the Jewish poetry could be felt, when the harp and viol were heard, the tabret, the cymbal, and the stringed instruments mingled with the voices of the living multitude. They were a people indeed who imbibed a love of music with the air they breathed, and whose very climate seemed to dispose them to harmony. The glorious anthems, too, which they chanted — anthems which taught as much as they elevated — were those composed by their warrior king.

At every town and village to which the procession came, it was received with shouts of joy. With the proverbial hospitality of the East, before the door of every house tables were standing, with dates, and honey, and bread, to refresh the pilgrims. At the

junction of the roads, in the fields, and at the entrance of each town, new crowds were waiting to join themselves to the long procession.

And thus the pilgrims from Hebron journeyed on, their trains sometimes covering both the ascent and descent of the hill, spreading over the plain, and winding like a wreath around the hill beyond. At length, descending a lofty elevation, whose sides were covered with vines, they beheld before them in the valley the Pools of Solomon. Then they halted, and the following Psalm was sung; "How lovely are thy tabernacles, Lord of Hosts," etc. Here they remained during the heat of midday, beneath the shade of the double rows of palms, which had been planted around the pools, and as they drank the refreshing draught of the cool rock-water, they blessed the memory of the king.

From the pools of Solomon they took their way through the hills to Bethlehem, continual accessions swelling their number, until it amounted to thousands. Beautiful, indeed, was the view from the rocky ridge on which stands the city of David. The amphitheatre which stretches around embraces the region about Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the plain of the valley of Rephaim. The Kedron flows through its fields, fruitful as the garden of the Lord, and all are thickly set with olive and fig trees, with vines and corn. All who could, went through Bethlehem on their way to the feast at Jerusalem. And here, in his birth-place, the warrior-bard was commem-

orated in the Psalm, "Lord, remember David," etc. A short distance only now separated them from Jerusalem, and as their eager haste increased at every step, their impatience found utterance in the Psalm, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, even upon His Holy Hill."

Expectation had now reached its height. It was too great even to allow its expression in words, but all were silently watching for the first sight of Jerusalem. A faint murmur spread from rank to rank as they were pressing eagerly forward. All at once the foremost exclaimed — "Jerusalem!" And through the valley of Rephaim resounded the shout — "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" All rushed onward to the brow of the hill; every hand was raised to bless the place of Zion's solemnities, and from every heart and tongue uprose the anthem: "Jerusalem, thou city built on high! We wish thee peace!"

Then rose the Holy City, and above it the dazzling glory of that temple which once covered the heights of the Mount of Vision. Its walls of purest marble cast a gleam through the valley. Court above court it circled round the mount like a succession of diadems, its alabaster porticoes, its porphyry pillars, and richly sculptured walls, and above all, that shrine which contained the holy of holies, the very palace of the King of kings. Built of the most precious marbles, it glittered in the light, and as the setting sun sank beneath the western hills, his

rays flashed back from the pinnacles of gold and burnished plates which cased its roof. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice; the trumpet had already sounded, and slowly the smoke of the sacrifice rose up to heaven, till, spreading out above, it seemed like some gigantic palm in the clearness of that Eastern sky. A few moments and the assembled multitudes had recovered from their surprise, when they thus paid their salutation to the temple and its priests: "Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord."

But above all, the solemnities of the temple itself were those which most appealed to every feeling of reverence in the Jew. The Israelite entered through the beautiful gate, and before him were the different courts, separated by porphyry pillars, and the many stately buildings for the priests and officers of the temple. Every material employed was costly and rare. Gold and the finest marble glittered on every side. He turned, and behind him, through the open colonnades, beheld the rich landscape which, like an amphitheatre, stretched around the Holy City. There, on the one side, was Bethlehem, with its lovely slopes, covered with vineyards and orange-groves, and on the other, the green sides of the Mount of Olives; and the eye wandered on, till in the distance it saw the mountains of Gilgal, which overlooked the rich valley of the Jordan.

But in the tabernacle itself the Israelite realized

that he stood in the presence of God. The altar was the throne, and every thing around displayed the rich pomp and beautiful ornaments which deck the court of an earthly monarch; the embroidered tapestry, the fine linen, the golden-branched lights, the transparent curtains, and the fuming incense. There were the dedicated loaves on the table of gold; the vases holding "the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord," and the flesh, ever renewed on the sacrificial altar. It seemed to be for the banquet of a monarch, yet it was ever inviolable, forever renewed, yet forever untouched. The veil which was never to be lifted; the cherubims spreading their mystical wings; the propitiatory, where the cloud of glory hung over "the Holy of Holies," every object around re-awakened in the mind of the Israelite the recollection that the palace of his sovereign was the temple of his God. How numerous, too, the attendants in this court, who served before the throne, and performed that ritual whose grandeur has never been surpassed. The Levites ministered by turns, in four and twenty courses of a thousand each. Four thousand more performed the lower offices, while four thousand singers with their musical instruments supplied that rich harmony which ever floated out from the hill of Zion's solemnities, and, borne on the wings of the wind over the Holy City, was a ceaseless invitation to its people to come up and worship. And with what reverence did the Jews regard him who stood at the head of this conse-

crated band, the High Priest, when on solemn festivals he came forth in the gorgeous robes which God himself had prescribed !

Such was the gorgeous and impressive ceremonial of the Jewish Temple. And should all this give way to the simple and severe worship of the Christian Church? Every where and at all hours, was their law, or some symbol of their law, kept in their sight. It was variously worn on their persons ; it was nailed to the door-posts of their habitations ; it formed their daily occupations in the morning, the noon, and the evening sacrifice. Their great festivals were connected with the productions of every season. The Passover could not be kept till their flocks furnished the paschal lamb ; the Pentecost till the wheat had ripened, for the fresh loaves of propitiation ; and the thick boughs and branches could not cover their tabernacles till they had gathered in their vineyards and their olive-grounds. The Israelites were reminded of their religious festivals by the living commemorations of nature.

We can easily, therefore, imagine how entirely the Jew must have changed his nature when all this was renounced, and he turned from the countless associations of his former life to begin a new existence.

There was one consideration which, more than any other, tended to array the Jews against the reception of Jesus of Nazareth. We refer to the preconceived notions of the Messiah which they had adopted.

They were too earthly and sensual to conceive of that mysterious Being as only a spiritual reformer. In the gorgeous visions of Isaiah "he was arrayed before them as a mighty conqueror, travelling in the greatness of his strength, treading down his enemies in his anger, and trampling them in his fury, — their blood sprinkled upon his garments, and staining all his raiment." And this harmonized too well with that brooding hope of vengeance on their oppressors which slumbered in the heart of every Jew, and quickened into life his religious fanaticism, to render them able to think of their deliverer in any more peaceful character. Every thing about the great deliverer was national and exclusive. The Holy City was to be the centre of his government, and there he was to reassemble all the scattered descendants of the tribes and expel their barbarous and foreign rulers. Christianity proclaimed that Judaism was intended only for the childhood of the human race; but now "the fullness of time" had come, and its mission was fulfilled. With the Pharisee, the new faith poured contempt upon his boasted learning, and swept away the long list of traditions which ages had been hoarding up. The lawyers, the interpreters of the sacred books, were filled with dismay, while they listened to one who assumed authority over the divinely inspired attributes of their ancient lawgiver, while the Sadducee felt that the very existence of his sect depended on the defeat of Christianity. To allay that passionate jealousy with which the people

looked upon the ceremonial law, was smiting to the ground that majestic fabric which ages had been rearing into symmetry and beauty; and with it, of course, fell the power and influence of its teachers.

And to whom were they to yield the sceptre of their power? Who were to fill the lofty seats they were called to abandon? A peasant of Galilee, with his disciples, fishermen and tax-gatherers. Can we wonder, then, that every feeling and passion was aroused to action? That habit, and pride, and interest, all united to awaken their animosity against the rising faith? Christianity utterly set at defiance all the grades and honors of earthly life. In the awards of the coming world, the despised and down-trodden Helot might inherit a brighter crown than that assigned to the master of imperial Rome. This faith was equally adapted to every country and clime. It was to spread its cheering rays over the snows of the North, and hold its cup of blessing to the panting savage beneath the tropics. Nothing could be conceived more utterly opposed to the narrow spirit of Jewish prejudices. It was a long time, indeed, before the apostles themselves could learn to look beyond the barriers which education had built up around them. They were continually startled by our Lord's revelations; wavering and fluctuating in their faith, and attempting in vain to reconcile his declarations with their own deeply seated erroneous views. We see in every action their exclusive Jewish feelings.

The Pagan as well as the Jew recognized the utter overthrow of his own long cherished faith in the triumph of Christianity. We cannot read the writers of that day without realizing that the whole life of the Heathen was directed and regulated by the spirit of Polytheism. He could not escape from its all-pervading influence. All the grave affairs of state were ushered in by its ceremonial. The Senate, whose meetings were always held in a temple or consecrated place, commenced its deliberations with a sacrifice, and each Senator, before he entered on business, dropped some wine or frankincense on the altar. The gods were appealed to as the arbiters of battle, and in the centre of the camp was always erected a consecrated shrine. When the Heathen traveled on the land he was under the protection of one divinity, and on the sea, of another. When he entered his home he passed at once into the protection of his household divinities and the ancestral gods of his family, or tribe, which presided over his domestic hearth. To the influence of these capricious deities they referred the drought and the mildew which blighted their fields, the murrain which swept away their cattle, and the swarms of locusts which in an hour destroyed the hopes of the husbandman. In every field and garden were found their statues; their shrines were erected by every fountain and in every grove.

To the spirit of poetry which pervaded ancient Heathenism we may attribute its wide-spread influence. To its votaries, Naiads were sporting in every

fountain, and the voices of the Dryads were heard in the echoes of the woods. When the leaves trembled on the branches, as the winds swept by, they were shaken by the Invisible God; and with hesitating step they entered the silent grotto, or trod the aisles of the dark forest, because these were especially the homes of the deities. When the blossom delighted them with its fragrance, Aurora had nourished it with her tears, and Zephyr expanded it with her breath. The rich clustering grapes were the gift of Bacchus; and for the bending harvest and the golden fruits of autumn they were indebted to the benignity of Ceres and Pomona. The very lights of heaven were but the radiance of the gods. In the revolutions of the sun they saw the path of Phœbus, as, seated in his car of fire, and borne along by immortal steeds, he daily circled round the world, and poured light and joy over the universe. The sea, too, had its rulers. In its coral palaces, Thetis and her nymphs held their mysterious revels; while through the blue waters the long-haired Triton floated in his car of pearl, and guided some favored bark away from the whirlpool or the rock. Thus, over the whole face of the land brooded the spirit of Paganism; and to the believers in this ancient creed it was not only a matter of poetic imagination, but of actual faith. Can we wonder then that the Heathen shrank from Christianity when it called him to give up those graceful superstitions which were never silent, which were so entwined with the actions of

his life as to become a part of life itself? To him, the sublime faith of the Nazarene was not only cheerless, but impious, because it swept away the countless deities whose altars filled the earth.

He but little comprehends the true spirit of Paganism who scornfully looks upon it as an array of gross and unmeaning superstitions. Still less does he understand the magnitude of that contest which Christianity was obliged to wage with it. False as the ancient mythology was, it supplied a longing which the heart of man must ever feel for something higher than earth affords on which to repose. And this faith, perhaps by the very dimness with which it portrayed another world, incited to cheerfulness and pleasure in the present life. There was no bright picture of the reward hereafter, and, therefore, hemmed in by darkening shadows which the eye could not penetrate, they clung to this existence, and endeavored to crowd into its narrow limits all the enjoyments of which life is susceptible. Life to them was precious as a season of enjoyment, and they made the most of it. The teeming earth was to them only a place in which to trade and barter for a few years; its paths were worn by the footsteps of those who had gone before; the heavens above addressed no lesson to their hearts; and all was "of the earth earthly." They felt that when they had trodden for a time the same dull round, they too must go, they knew not whither. Is it strange, then, that they grasped at the cup of pleasure which was

within their reach and with no elevating hopes in the future sank to that degradation which characterized the Corinthians whose maxim was, "Let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die." Life beyond the grave had hitherto been a thing hoped for, but not assured. Unsanctioned by any divine authority, that hope never sank into the hearts of the people, nor became a principle of action. But Christianity unveiled to them an existence "unmeasured by the flight of years." It taught them that this life is but the germ of another, and that not until that other has dawned upon us will all things have their fullness and completion. It revealed a pure and unsensual heaven for the just, and seizing on the actions of this present existence, gave them dignity by linking them to the next, and showing that even there they had their influence. Thus it converted speculation into certainty, and proved that the soul did not yearn in vain, when visions of an immortality flitted before it.

Until the reign of Nero the Roman emperors had done nothing that was hostile to Christianity, having probably regarded the Christians as a sect of the Jews, with whose customs merely they were well acquainted, and whom they had always tolerated in all the provinces of the empire. But the enmity which the Jews manifested towards them, made it apparent, after a while, that they were a distinct body of men. The proselytes made by the Jews were few compared with those that were made by the Christians ; those converts were so numerous,

that it began to be apprehended by the Roman authorities that there might be some danger of the discontinuance of the rites of the Heathen religion, upon the observance of which it was imagined the welfare of the state depended.

It was during the year following Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, and after he had left that city, that the fatal fire occurred which enveloped in ruin all the ancient grandeur of the Eternal City. About A.D. 64, the emperor Nero wantonly set fire to the city of Rome, and taking advantage of the popular prejudice against the Christians he caused the report to be circulated that it was done by them; and although no credit was given to the accusation, yet, under that pretence, he practised upon them, with the concurrence of the people, the most shocking barbarities. They were imprisoned and tortured. Some were crucified, and others were impaled, being held in an upright position by stakes thrust through their jaws; some were thrown to the wild beasts. Great numbers of them were wrapped in garments dipped in pitch, and other combustibles, fastened to posts, and set on fire, that they might give light to the city, and so expired in most excruciating agony. Nero is said to have illuminated his own gardens in this shocking manner, and by this light to have amused himself in driving his chariot. In this persecution the tender sex was not spared, and notwithstanding the general odium existing against the Christians, these cruelties excited the compassion of many,

who could not but perceive that these sacrifices were made to gratify the cruelty and caprice of one man.

Nero had been declared Emperor at the age of seventeen. A boy of fine abilities, grandson of an emperor and son of an ambitious mother, he had received the best education which could be had at Rome. His mother was the beautiful Agrippina. When he began his reign his principal ministers were Seneca and Burrhus; the first the most distinguished philosopher, and the other the best soldier of the time. Under their care the empire flourished, and it was thought that Nero would be the most humane and generous prince ever known. So little can we predict of the future of a boy of seventeen. Seneca, his tutor, did not dare, and his mother did not care, to restrict him in the indulgence of his appetites or passions, and to the unlimited gratification of appetite and passion he surrendered himself. So utterly abandoned to vice and licentiousness in every form did he become, that in four or five years, just about the time Paul arrived in Italy, the prosperous period of Nero's reign was at an end, and Rome began to realize that her chief ruler was a cowardly, licentious, cruel drunkard, whose vices were hurrying him to insanity, and who was employing the power intrusted to him in compassing the overthrow of those by whose help he had attained it.

At the beautiful watering place of Baiæ was the summer residence of the emperor. In the spring of A.D. 60, being then at Baiæ, he sent to his mother

an invitation to visit him, that they might effect a reconciliation; for there had been a bitter and growing jealousy between him and his beautiful but wicked mother. Agrippina gladly accepted the invitation, and came to Baiaë to celebrate with him the feasts of Minerva, which occupied part of the last half of March. She came by water. Nero met her affectionately at the shore, took her by the hand and embraced her, and walked with her to the villa, where she was to take a barge on the lake of Baiaë for the palace where she was to stay. There she and her son passed the afternoon in conversation. At last he bade her adieu, with more warmth than seemed quite natural at a parting which was to be of a few hours duration only. Whether his object in so doing was to keep up the delusion in her mind that this was indeed a reconciliation, or whether his heart melted at the thought of the crime he was about to perpetrate, is uncertain. The barge in which she was to embark, adorned with great pomp as for an empress, had been carefully arranged, so that at a signal given the roof of the cabin should fall upon and crush all who were within. By this plan the inhuman monster intended to effect the murder of his mother, without subjecting himself to the suspicion of being her murderer. Upon the lake there would be few witnesses, and the occurrence would be placed to the account of shipwreck, or accident. Of course he did not take passage himself on the fated vessel; but, after bidding her an affectionate

farewell, he retired to his own palace to await the result.

The night was clear, and the stars bright. Agrippina lay on her couch in her cabin, talking cheerfully with her attendants of her son's regret for what had passed, and the renewal of their friendship, when of a sudden the deck above them fell in. It was heavily laden with lead, and crushed to death the officer to whom she was talking; but so lodged on the high sides of her own couch, which were stronger than they were intended to be, that she escaped. Acerro-nia, her lady in waiting, escaped also. The sailors cried out that the barge was sinking. The women both plunged into the water, seeing or suspecting that death awaited them upon the vessel. The men around sprang forward, ready to do their master's bidding in a less clumsy and more certain manner; but Acer-ronia, this faithful friend of the empress, with a wo-man's will and a woman's devotedness, drew on her own head the blows and stabs of the murderers, by crying aloud, as if drowning, "Save me,—I am Nero's mother." Uttering those words she was killed, while the Empress in safer silence, buoyed up by fragments of the wreck, floated to the shore.

Nero, thwarted in his secret attempt upon the life of his mother, the next day after her escape sent a guard of soldiers to her palace; and there, where she was deserted even by her last attendant, without pre-
tence of secrecy, she was put to death. Thus perished the daughter and mother of a Cæsar.

Fearing sedition in the army after his commission of such a crime, Nero wrote to the Senate, declaring that he had ordered that Agrippina should be killed only when he had arrested an assassin whom she sent to murder him. The Senate was merely a tool in his hands, and thanks were voted to the gods for his success. An annual festival was appointed in honor of his murder of his mother ; and it was ordered that her birthday should always be regarded as an unlucky day, in which no business of state should be entered upon. Nero received intelligence of this decree, which somewhat quieted his fears. The people came out in their organized bodies as electors to meet him ; the senate joined in the procession, arrayed in the dresses worn on occasions of a festival ; bands of women and children were arranged in the order of sex and age, and seats raised on each side above the way by which he came, that they might witness his triumphal entrance. Thus proudly, the ruler of an enslaved people, he went as a triumphant conqueror to the capitol, and rendered thanks, and then plunged into every species of wickedness, from which, until that time, respect for his mother had in some slight degree restrained him.

Seneca, who was minister of state at this period, must not be overlooked. As Nero concentrated all the power of the time, so Seneca was the embodiment of its learning. He had introduced Nero into power, had restrained his madness when he could, and with his colleague had conducted the general

administration of the Empire with the greatest honor, while the boy was wearing out his life in dissipation in the palace. Seneca dared say more to Nero, to venture more with him, than did any other man of those around him. Yet Seneca's system was a cowardly system, although it was the best of Roman morality. All that Seneca's boldness dared was to seduce the tyrant into the exercise of the least injurious of tyrannies. From the plunder of a province he diverted his attention with the carnage of the circus; from the ruin of the empire, with the ruin of a noble family. He could only warn him from vice for selfish reasons. He had not, what Paul had, motives to offer. He could not tell him what God made him for, what God wished of him, nor like the Christian Paul declare that the empire of God was all around him, close at hand, to which he the tyrant, Seneca the philosopher, and Paul the prisoner were alike subjects.

Neither had Seneca power to arrest the first public persecution of the Christians which Nero ordered after the conflagration of the city of Rome. They were dragged before magistrates, as Jesus had prophesied they would be, and were called upon to renounce their faith. In most instances they stood firm. They suffered death, and death in extreme torture, rather than deny their Redeemer. From their testimony, given with so much courage, the cause of Christianity has gained more than in any other way; and therefore it has become a proverb, that "the blood of the

martyrs is the seed of the Church." The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, put a stop to the persecution of the Christians. Three or four years was probably the extent of this persecution, as in A.D. 68 this tyrant was called to account for all his horrid barbarities.

The awful sufferings that were endured in Jerusalem, the city without whose gates our Saviour was crucified, are probably without a parallel in the history of nations. Although a narration of the destruction of this celebrated city may not be considered as coming legitimately within the scope of a history of the struggles of the early Christians, yet, as it forms so important a part of the history of this period, a clear understanding of its wonderful overthrow, and of the causes which led to it, cannot but prove interesting and useful.

About one hundred and sixty years before Christ, the Jews, being then greatly oppressed by the kings of Syria, sent a message to the Romans, for their assistance. A treaty for mutual aid and defence was made, and was continued for a long time. At length, some sixty years before Christ, two of the Jews, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, became involved in a contest as to which of them was entitled to the sovereignty, and finally agreed to submit the question to the decision of the Roman general, Pompey, who was then near Judea. But afterwards, Aristobulus withdrew from that agreement, and went on to prepare for war. Pompey, thereupon, to bring him to

submission, marched his forces to Jerusalem, and took the city after a siege of three months. The Romans exacted the payment of a large tribute, permitted Hyrcanus to remain as the principal ruler, and carried Aristobulus prisoner to Rome.

Thus things continued, with some slight changes, till forty years before Christ, when Herod the Great was made king of the Jews ; though he was in some degree subject to the Romans, and accountable to them for the manner in which he administered the government. But although then made king, it was nearly three years before he brought the whole country under his sway, which he finally accomplished by taking Jerusalem, which was again overrun by a conquering army. Herod was succeeded by his son Archelaus. He reigned about ten years, and was a very cruel and oppressive ruler ; so much so that the Jews sent messengers to Rome to complain of him, and accuse him before the Emperor Augustus. He could not defend himself from those accusations, and was condemned, and banished to France. At the same time, Publius Sulpitius Quirinius, the one who is called Cyrenius by Luke, was sent to organize the kingdom into a Roman province. Thus it remained under the control of different Procurators, or Governors, of whom Pilate, Felix, and Festus are mentioned by name in the New Testament, until about A.D. 66. At this time Gestius Florus was governor, and conducted himself in such a manner that the Jews finally rebelled, and then commenced the Jew-

ish War, which terminated in the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

In that destruction is seen a very striking fulfilment of the prophecies of the Bible. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy we find prophecies relating to this period, on the rebellion of the Jews against their governor. Florus Cestius Gallus, who was a ruler and general in Syria, came with an army to quiet the country by his presence. He came first to Ptolemais, a city on the Mediterranean sea. From that place he overran the country of Galilee, and then went to Cæsarea, which is also on the Mediterranean, about thirty-five miles north of Joppa, and fifty-five from Jerusalem. Thus conquering as he advanced, he finally came to Jerusalem, and pitched his camp on the hill called Scopus. On the fourth day he came into the northern part of the city, that which is called Bezetha, and soon after passing also the second wall, laid siege to the third wall, which ran between Zion and Akron. Here he continued for a number of days, and it was supposed he was about to take the city, when he suddenly withdrew his forces and entirely left Jerusalem. Josephus, the Jewish historian, uses the following language in reference to the event: "It then happened that Cestius was not conscious, either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired

from the city, without any reason in the world." Thus was the way provided for the fulfilment of prophecy.

In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, twentieth and twenty-first verses, we read: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them which are in the countries enter thereinto." Also in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, fifteenth and sixteenth verses: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth let him understand, then let those which be in Judea flee into the mountains." By the abomination of desolation was meant something connected with the Roman armies. The Roman banners were objects of worship to the Roman soldiers, for they contained representations of their gods and generals; they were, therefore, held in abomination by the Jews, for they abhorred every thing that savored of idolatry. Cestius had reached the third wall of the city, therefore those abhorred, abominated standards, which foretold the threatened desolation of their city, were now waving in triumph, but a little way from the holy temple gates.

It was now almost forty years since Christ had left the earth, and in that time his followers had greatly increased in number, and many thousands of them

were residents in Jerusalem. To save them from the sufferings which awaited the inhabitants of the devoted city he had uttered the prediction and warning above cited. They had faith, and trusted in Christ's word, and when the army drew near the city they began to make preparations for taking their final leave. Then it was that He who holds the hearts of all men in his hand, exerted such an influence on the mind of Cestius as led him to withdraw his formidable legions, and thus the way was left open for the Christians to escape; and they did so by withdrawing to the country far beyond the limits of Judea.

Another warning uttered by Christ in connection with the predicted destruction of Jerusalem was this: "Let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." It is a fact, that when the Roman forces began finally to overrun the land, many of the Jews withdrew into Jerusalem, hoping that they should there be safe; but the disciples of Christ, remembering his word, did not follow their example, and thereby escaped the calamity which befell them.

Cestius, after he left the country, sent ambassadors to Nero, who was then emperor, informing him of his ill success. Nero immediately determined to send Vespasian, an old and experienced general, with instructions to bring the whole country under entire subjection. Vespasian thereupon came, as Cestius had before him, to Ptolemais, where Titus, his son, soon met him, with a great part of the Roman forces which had been at Alexandria in Egypt. From Ptolemais

they marched into Galilee, in the northern part of Palestine. This was soon subdued, city by city, place by place, though the Jews made most determined and vigorous opposition to their advance; and Vespasian had almost reached Jerusalem, when he heard of the disturbances and revolution which had taken place at Rome. He was immediately proclaimed emperor by the Romans who were in Judea and in Egypt, and thereupon hastened to Rome, in order to secure firmly the power which had been thus conferred; but before he departed he appointed governors and officers in the different places which had been captured, and appointed Titus general of all the Roman forces, and directed him to lay siege to Jerusalem.

Before the approach of Titus the Jews had been far from taking any advantage of the absence of their enemies. On the contrary, they had been doing themselves infinite mischief by their divisions, so that at his approach there were three hostile factions in the city. The interior part of the temple was held by Eleazer, whose partisans were not numerous, but they were the best fortified. John was in the outer part of the temple, and Simon, the son of Gioras, commanded in the town at large. This Simon had been ravaging the country, and had been let into the city by the people to oppose John, whose followers were guilty of the greatest excesses. The Passover was approaching, and great numbers of Jews and proselytes had come from Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and foreign countries, to attend the feast. Eleazer therefore

opened the gates of the inner court, and permitted all those who wished to enter and offer their sacrifices, and worship God according to their customs. The followers of John under this pretence entered the temple, and Eleazer and many of his party were slain; others of them joined their countrymen under John, whose armed followers now amounted to over eight thousand men, while those of Simon, who held the city, were ten thousand, besides five thousand Idumeans. These parties, however, although so hostile to each other, always united against the Romans.

Titus brought with him four legions of soldiers, besides auxiliary troops. Those legions, containing probably about five thousand men each, together with his twenty cohorts of allies, making about ten thousand more, and his eight troops of horsemen, amounting to nearly a thousand, made up an army thirty-five or forty thousand strong. Having approached Jerusalem he ordered his soldiers to encamp; some on the Mount of Olives, and the rest on the hill Scopus.

In a poem called the "Fall of Jerusalem," we find a beautiful expression of the feelings with which Titus may be imagined to have looked for the first time on the beautiful city which he was ordered to destroy:—

“ — It must be !

And yet it moves me, Romans ! it confounds
The counsel of my firm philosophy,
That ruin's merciless ploughshare must pass o'er,
And barren salt be sowed on yon proud city.
As on our olive-crowned hill we stand,

Where Kedron at our feet its scanty waters
Distils from stone to stone with gentle motion,
As through a valley sacred to sweet peace.
How boldly doth it front us ! how majestically !
Like a luxurious vineyard, the hill side
Is hung with marble fabrics, line o'er line,
Terrace o'er terrace, nearer still, and nearer
To the blue heavens. Here bright and sumptuous palaces,
With cool and verdant gardens interspersed ;
Here towers of war, that frown in massy strength,
While over all hangs the rich purple eve,
As conscious of its being her last farewell
Of light and glory to that faded city.
And, as our clouds of battle dust and smoke
Are melted into air, behold the temple,
In undisturbed and lone serenity,
Finding itself a solemn sanctuary
In the profound of heaven ! It stands before us
A mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles !
The very sun, as though he worshipped there,
Lingers upon the gilded cedar roofs ;
And down the long and branching porticos,
On every flowing sculptured capital,
Glitters the homage of his parting beams.
By Hercules ! the sight might almost win
The offended majesty of Rome to mercy."

Jerusalem was built upon two hills opposite to each other, and divided by a valley, on the entrance of which the houses terminated. One of these hills, on which the upper city was built, was much higher than the other, and was named by King David the Citadel. The other hill, called Acra, on which was built the lower city, was in the shape of a crescent. The

valley which separated these two hills had the singular name of the Valley of the Cheesemongers, and extended as far as Siloam, a fountain celebrated for the abundance and the sweetness of its waters. The two hills on which the city was built were fortified by three walls on every side, except on the sides where the precipices led into the valley, which being impassable were guarded only by one wall. Of the three walls which guarded the city, the most ancient one was begun by King David and finished by Solomon, and surrounded that part of the city in which the temple stood. The second wall surrounded the northern part of the city. The third wall was built by King Agrippa to guard the new part of the town; and after passing the sepulchral caverns it joined the old wall at the valley of Cedron. This new part of the city was called Bezetha. The towers upon these walls were of an amazing height, and were as solid as the walls themselves. They contained rooms, and cisterns for rain water, the ascent to which was by a very broad staircase; and each wall had a great number of these towers. Three of the towers in the old wall were built by Herod the Great, in honor of his friend, his brother, and his wife. These towers were of white marble; and each block was of an immense size, so that when finished they had the appearance of one solid stone cut into the shape of stairs.

Within the wall on which these towers stood Herod had built himself a palace of a very curious construc-

tion. The wall and towers formed a part of the palace, and each tower contained a hundred bed-chambers, which were ornamented with a variety of precious stones, collected from all parts of the world, and intended for the use of his guests. The vessels in those chambers were of gold and silver, and the chambers themselves were surrounded with porticoes, supported by pillars of different marbles. Between the towers were groves of trees, with long walks through them, and cisterns and canals of water, with brazen statues, out of which the water ran. Herod's celebrated dove-cotes for tame pigeons were here. This magnificent palace was burnt and nearly destroyed, not by their enemies, the Romans, but by the quarrelsome Jews themselves.

The temple erected by King Solomon was situated upon a hill. The plain on the top of this hill was not originally of sufficient area, but Solomon levelled it and threw up banks until it became a large plain. The Jews had built a wall from the bottom of the hill around three sides of the temple. They then surrounded the upper courts, and afterwards the lower ones, with cloisters. These cloisters were double, and the pillars which supported them were of one block of solid white marble, and the roofs adorned with cedar, curiously carved.

The temple stood on Mount Moriah; and as the principal entrance was on the east, it looked out over the Valley of Jehoshaphat and up the Mount of Olives. The outer wall, which surrounded all the

temple buildings, was twenty-five cubits in height; and as a cubit is generally estimated as being equal to a foot and a half, the wall was nearly forty feet in height. Upon entering this outer wall at either gate was an open space called the "Court of the Gentiles;" it was so called because the Gentiles were allowed to come thus near and no nearer to the temple itself. This court was in measure five hundred cubits, or above an eighth of a mile on each side, being, it is said, just square in form. It was from this outer court and its buildings that our Saviour drove the money-changers, and those that sold cattle and sheep and doves, telling them that they had made it a "den of thieves."

Beneath the rich buildings built upon the columns, and extending above the tops of the walls, was a wide, open portico, or porch, which extended around the entire circuit of the court. The porch on the east was called Solomon's Porch; and is the place into which the people ran, "greatly wondering," when Peter and John, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, cured the man who had been lame from his birth.

On entering the temple the visitor passed the first cloisters to the second court of the temple which is said to have been three cubits in height. This wall, though low, was elegant; upon it were placed pillars, on which was written the law of the temple, that no foreigner should go within that sanctuary; this second court was called the sanctuary, and was ascended by

fourteen steps. Beyond the steps was a piece of level ground, and then another flight of steps which led to the second court. This court was one hundred and thirty-five cubits in measure in each direction, and was called the "Court of the Women;" it was so called because women were not permitted to go any further, or ascend the next flight of steps. The Court of the Women was encircled by a wall about twenty-five cubits in height. It was surrounded by columns and porches, or porticoes, in the same style as the outer court. In the four corners of it were smaller courts, or rooms, for purposes connected with the temple services. On the north side there were eight gates; on each of the others four, excepting the last, on which there were but two. Nine of these gates were covered on each side with gold and silver; and one was made of Corinthian brass. The one called the "Beautiful Gate" was very rich in its ornaments of silver and gold, and is supposed to have been the gate at which the lame beggar was laid.

The stairs beyond the Court of the Women led to a space extending, on three sides of the Temple, on the outside of a row of columns. This was called the "Court of Israel," or, the "Court of the Men," and was the limit to which the people of the Jewish nation were allowed to advance. This court was eleven cubits in width. Here those who wished were permitted to remain while the priests were performing their various duties in offering sacrifices and attending to the service of the temple.

On the inside of this court, probably between or near the row of columns, ran a low stone balustrade or wall, one cubit in height. Within this was the "Court of the Priests," which extended on all sides of the temple. In this court stood the Holy House itself.

At the head of another flight of steps stood the porch of the temple. This porch was one hundred cubits in length, and one hundred and twenty cubits in height; the parts projecting beyond the rest were sometimes called the wings of the temple. Before the door was a vail of the same size as the door. It was a Babylonian curtain, and embroidered with blue and scarlet, and gold, and fine linen. The scarlet color represented fire; the linen, or flax, the earth; blue, the air, and purple the sea.

The first part of the temple entered was called the "Holy Place," and contained the candlestick, the table of show-bread and the altar of incense. The seven lights which were in the candlestick signified the seven planets; and the twelve loaves on the table of show-bread the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The most interior part of the temple was called the "Holy of Holies;" no one was permitted to enter it except the High Priest, who entered it once a year, on the great day of Atonement.

The outside of the temple was covered with plates of gold, brilliant and dazzling; its top was covered with spikes. In front of it stood the altar, of a square form, with the corners projecting like horns; and the

passage to it was up a slightly inclined plane. The temple was guarded by the tower of Antonia, which joined the cloisters, and was built by Herod, and in which a Roman legion was stationed.

After all things were in readiness for the siege, Titus removed his camp still nearer to the city, and ordered high mounds to be raised before the walls. On the top of these mounds were placed the different machines, or engines, which were used for throwing stones, darts, and arrows, and sometimes fire, into the city. The machine called a battering ram, which was used against the wall, was a long beam of timber, fitted with a head of iron, resembling in form somewhat the head of a ram. This was hung by a rope on a cross-beam between two posts which were fixed in the ground near to the wall to be attacked. It was drawn back by a large number of men, and then allowed to swing freely forward; the iron head thus driven against the wall gradually loosened the stones and drove them from their place. The stones thrown by the engines constructed for that purpose were large, and being white, and very bright, the watchmen on the walls could see when they were coming, and cried aloud in their own language, "The Son cometh;" thus warned of danger, those who were exposed to it found no difficulty in avoiding it by changing their position. To obviate this the Romans resorted to the practice of blackening the stones, thereby rendering them invisible until very near the object at which they were thrown.

On the fifteenth day of the siege the Romans obtained possession of the first wall. The factions in the city laid aside their disputes, and their hatred, and united their forces. They ran round the walls with torches which they threw against the engines, while the bolder of them jumped down upon the hurdles that covered the machines and pulled them asunder. Titus now pushed forward his attack upon the second wall, which yielded on the fifth day after he had taken the first. A breach being effected, he entered with a thousand of his troops, and strove to induce the people to surrender; for he knew that the common people were willing to yield possession of the city to him, and were prevented from so doing only by the mad and stubborn zealots who held out against him. But while he was thus treating with the more quietly disposed, he was suddenly attacked by the armed forces, and eventually driven outside the wall. He immediately renewed his assaults, however, and after a hard contest, on the fourth day, he regained possession of the wall and entirely demolished it.

Many of the Jews at this period in the siege endeavored to escape from the city and join the Romans. But Simon and John held possession of the gates and slew all who came near them. They also rushed into the private houses and tormented those whom they found within, in order to make them confess that they had food concealed; so that the people were compelled to eat their corn unground, lest the sound of the grinding should attract attention, and thereby lead to

detection and probable death. To such extent did famine prevail, that many sold all they had for one measure, which is little more than a peck, of wheat, or barley; but often, before they had eaten it they were discovered by the soldiers, and if they made any resistance to being deprived of their last morsel were at once murdered.

Titus, although he deeply compassionated the suffering people, went on with the siege. He had now raised up four large banks. The one against the tower of Antonia was destroyed by John, who from within had undermined the space of ground upon which the bank was built, and supported the ground above with beams laid across one another. He then caused a quantity of materials to be brought and covered them with pitch and bitumen, and then set them on fire. As the fire consumed the cross beams that supported the Roman works, the bank fell in with a tremendous crash. Smoke and dust arose in thick clouds, followed in a short time by a clear flame, which spread a sudden terror through the Roman legions.

Two days after this Simon made an attempt to destroy the other banks, for the Romans had placed their engines upon them, and had already begun to destroy the wall. He sent out two or three Jews, headed by a man named Chagiras, provided with torches, for the purpose of setting fire to the engines. These men broke through the Roman soldiers and did not stop until they had attained their object; nor

would they retire until they saw the flames actually ascending. Thereupon the Romans issuing from their camps, and the Jews from the walls, met and fought hand to hand. In vain did the Romans attempt to drag the engines out of the fire. The Jews caught hold of the battering ram, although the iron was red hot; and the Romans, surrounded by the flames and unable to save the engines, were glad to retreat to their camp.

Titus now called a council of war. Some of the boldest of the chiefs advised that the whole army should attack Jerusalem at once; while the more cautious were in favor, at first, of raising banks. But Titus proposed that a wall should be built around the whole city, which would either drive the citizens to despair by cutting off all means of escape, or would reduce them more completely by famine. The proposition was acquiesced in by his officers, and the work was thereupon commenced. The wall was about five miles in length and strengthened by thirteen buildings for garrisons; and although the statement may seem incredible, the whole was completed in the brief space of three days.

All chance for escape was now cut off, and famine commenced its terrible ravages. The upper rooms of nearly every house were filled with dying women and children, while the lanes of the city were strewn with the bodies of the aged. The young men wandered about the market-places like shadows and fell down dead in the streets. Few were buried; for the sick

were not strong enough to perform that office for their deceased friends ; and those who still were healthy were deterred from the undertaking by the consideration of its immensity. No lamentations were heard, for those who saw others die knew that they must soon follow. Titus seeing the ditch full of dead bodies, was so much affected by it, that it is said he lifted up his hands to heaven, and called God to witness that this was not his work. Numbers were carried out at the gates to be buried at the public expense. A deserter informed Titus that six hundred thousand had been carried out at the gates, and that being unable to carry them all out, they had filled whole houses with them, and shut them up. On the seventeenth of July, Titus took the citadel of Antonia, and consequently approached the temple : and at that time the daily sacrifice was discontinued for want of victims.

The citadel of Antonia is the " castle " referred to in the account given in the twenty-first chapter of Acts of the seizure of Paul by a Jewish mob ; the " chief captain of the band " was the commander of the Roman garrison which was stationed there ; and the " stairs " on which Paul stood when he " beckoned with his hand " and addressed the people, were the stairs leading from the porticos of the court to the fortress.

The citadel being taken, the Romans rushed to the temple, where they were met at the entrance by the Jews, and a terrible conflict took place. Darts and

spears were thrown away; drawing their swords each fell upon the other, hand to hand. The impetuous zeal of the Jews was more than a match for Roman skill. The conflict continued for several hours, the Jews constantly pouring from the city to defend their temple, until the Romans were compelled to give way and rest content with the conquest of the tower of Antonia.

Titus now gave orders that his soldiers should dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and open a passage for the residue of his army to come up. He then sent for Josephus, and desired him to address his countrymen, and offer terms of peace to John if he would but spare the temple. But all his appeals and efforts were fruitless; and Titus finding himself obliged to continue the siege, gave orders that his army should attack the guards of the temple about the ninth hour of the night. He himself put on his armor and prepared to accompany them; but they all united in the entreaty that he would not, asserting that they should fight better if they knew that his eyes were upon them, and that he himself was safe; thereupon he stationed himself on a high place in the tower of Antonia, from which he could overlook all their movements.

The Jews now sought to entrap the Romans. As has been before stated, above the colonades which surrounded the court were buildings of great richness and extent, which, in the history given of the siege, are called "cloisters." These cloisters were built

within the walls, but extended above them. The Jews filled a part of the western cloister with combustible materials and then retired. The Romans seeing this, many of them took ladders, and ascending them entered the cloister; but when it was filled with soldiers the Jews set fire to it. The Romans were seized with consternation when they found themselves surrounded by the flames; some threw themselves down backwards into the city, some fell among their enemies, and many jumped down to their own companions breaking their limbs in the fall. Titus, who was witnessing the whole occurrence, called aloud to their companions and fellow soldiers to rescue them; but in vain were all their efforts. All who remained were burned to death, with the exception of a young man whose name was Longus; he escaped from the flames, and the Jews offered him his life if he would come down; but his brother, Cornelius, entreated him not to do so, for the honor of the Romans and for his own glory. Thereupon Longus drew his sword and slew himself. The cloister as far as John's tower was entirely consumed, and the next day the Romans burned the northern cloister.

All this while vast numbers were perishing in the city by famine. Wherever food was to be found, relations, friends and neighbors were fighting for possession of it; until the condition of the entire population became such that even their enemies were moved with compassion for them. The following are the words of Josephus:—"Their hunger was

so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew every thing, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them ; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes, and the very leather that belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed, while the very wisps of hay became food for some. A certain woman named Mary had been living to the east of the Jordan, in a village named Bethezob. She was distinguished both for her family and her wealth, but on account of the state of the country had come up to Jerusalem just before the siege, and there remained. The merciless and seditious men who had possession of the city knew of her wealth, and were continually plundering her house, though, for some reason, they spared her life. They had reduced her to the lowest depth of suffering and want, until, under the influence of the awful madness brought on by starvation and despair, seizing her little son hanging at her bosom, she exclaimed, "O thou miserable infant ! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition ? Come, be thou my food ! and be thou a fury to these seditious murderers, and a byword to the world, which is all that is wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews !" Incredible as it may appear, having uttered these passionate exclamations, she slew him, and immediately roasted him, and eating one half of the body concealed the remainder. But the infuriated and half-starved robbers coming in and perceiving that she had just taken food, com-

manded her at once to bring forth what she had, or they would without delay take her life. Thereupon, bringing forward the remains, she exclaimed, "This is mine own son, and what has been done is my own doing. Come, eat of this food, for I have eaten of it myself. Do not pretend to be more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother."

In this terrible occurrence was found the fulfilment of the prediction of Moses, as recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, from the fifty-third to the fifty-seventh verse: "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee; so that the man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eyes shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children, which he shall leave; so that he shall not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left them in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her children, for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness.

wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."

Titus now gave orders that the battering rams should be brought into action against the walls of the outer court. To this the Jews made furious opposition, and another bloody conflict took place upon and around the walls. The Roman soldiers, despairing of success by means of their engines, at last brought their ladders for the purpose of climbing up to the cloisters. The Jews made no effort to interrupt their progress; but when they had reached the summit, fell upon them, and thrusting them down backwards, committed most fearful havoc among them. Titus, witnessing the dreadful slaughter of his men, and perceiving that it was in vain to think of saving the court, gave immediate orders that the gates should be set on fire. The silver with which the gates were covered being soon heated, the flames readily communicated with the wood within, from whence they spread rapidly, and caught hold of the cloisters. The Jews, beholding the fire suddenly surrounding them, were lost in astonishment, and unable to decide as to what measures should be adopted they neither thought of defending themselves nor of extinguishing the fire, but stood looking on in silent despair. The fire continued for two days, and consumed the greater part of the cloisters which surrounded the holy house, or inner part of the temple.

On the third day after, Titus held a meeting of the

generals of his army, with whom he consulted as to the expediency and necessity of setting fire to the holy house. His own opinion was that the people should be destroyed and not their buildings; that no effort should be spared to save so beautiful a specimen of architecture as the temple, which would be an ornament to the Roman Empire. Several of the commanders coincided with him, and he accordingly dispatched some chosen troops to make their way through the ruins of the cloisters, and extinguish the fire. The Jews, thereupon, took courage, and boldly attacked the soldiers who were guarding the outer court of the temple. Titus, stationed on the tower of Antonia, perceiving that these guards were not strong enough to defend themselves, sent a troop of chosen horsemen to their aid, with whom the Jews continued to fight valiantly, until overpowered by numbers they were compelled to retreat into the inner court of the temple, in which they shut themselves up. Notwithstanding the desire of Titus to save the temple, Providence had otherwise decreed; the fall of Jerusalem and her beautiful temple had been predicted ages before, and the time for the fulfilment of the prediction had arrived. Our Saviour too had told his disciples when they were showing him the buildings of the temple, that the day was coming in which there should not be left one stone upon another that should not be cast down.

The Jews who had shut themselves up in the inner temple, came out and attacked the soldiers

who had been sent to quench the fire. The Romans, however, put them to flight, and even followed them into the holy house. One of the soldiers, without waiting for orders, perhaps regardless of what he was doing, snatched up some of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were around the holy house. As the flames ascended the Jews raised a cry of lamentation and ran to stay its progress, regardless of their lives in their zeal to save the consecrated place of worship, for which they had already perilled and suffered so much. A messenger hastened with the intelligence to Titus, who was reposing in his tent after the fatigue of the last battle. He arose in great haste and ran to the spot, followed by his commanders and the residue of the soldiers. In vain were all his efforts to stay the progress of the flames. He called to the soldiers with a loud voice, and held up his right hand by way of signal; but they would not, or did not see or hear. They crowded into the temple, many of them trampled on by others; while many fell among the ruins of the cloisters which were still hot and smoking, and were destroyed in the same miserable way as those whom they had conquered.

Titus, finding that his voice commanded no attention, and that the flames were spreading with great rapidity, hastened with his commanders and entered the temple. The inner part of it was not yet con-

sumed, and he still hoped that it might be saved. He there endeavored to persuade the soldiers to cease firing the building, and gave orders to the centurion Liberatus to beat those who would not do so; but their respect for their general was not so great as their hatred of the Jews. The hope of plunder, too, led them on; for seeing the doors and walls glittering with gold, they imagined that the place must be filled with it.

Titus was soon compelled to abandon all hope, for as he was coming out to address the people the flames burst out from the interior of the holy house itself, and it was soon burned to the ground.

While the temple was burning, a mournful tragedy was being enacted throughout Jerusalem. The Roman legions, with a terrific shout, devoted themselves to the work of slaughter and plunder. Old men, children, priests, and women were put to death without distinction. Those who were already nearly speechless with famine, when they saw the holy house on fire, spent their last breath in groans. The surrounding mountains echoed with lamentations. The Romans deeming it now useless to spare any part of the temple, set fire to the cloisters which remained, and to the treasury which contained the riches of the Jewish nation; money, garments, and precious goods being all deposited in it. The outer part of the temple too, in which a great number of men, women, and children had taken refuge, was fired before Titus had decided what should be done with them; and the

poor wretches were either burned in the cloisters or threw themselves headlong down the precipice.

This gathering was occasioned by a false prophet, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that "God commanded them to get into the temple, where they should be delivered in a miraculous manner." The miserable people were easily deluded to their ruin by these false ones, who seemed to spring up only to add to their misery, while at the same time they disregarded signs which many declared had appeared to warn them of their danger. Christ himself had foretold that false prophets should arise at this time. He says: "Many false prophets shall arise and deceive many"; and again: "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Josephus informs us that four years before the war commenced, a man who came up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles began suddenly to cry aloud, "A voice from the East, a voice from the West, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this unholy people." He was taken before the public officers and severely scourged, but at each stroke of the lash he only exclaimed, "Wo, wo to Jerusalem!" This conduct he continued for years, until one day as he was going around upon the wall he exclaimed, "Wo, wo to the city, and to the people, and to the holy house!" and then added, "Wo, wo to myself

also!" when he was struck dead by a stone from one of the Roman engines. But all these signs and warnings the deluded people rejected, or interpreted as being in their own favor; they perished in their awful blindness.

The Romans now collected their ensigns and placed them at the eastern gate of the temple, where they worshipped according to their own religion, and hailed the conqueror Titus. Simon and John, and their party, having taken possession of the royal palace, for some time resisted the Romans, who had full possession of all the lower city. To the taking of the upper city Titus now turned his attention. It was built on so steep a hill that it was necessary to raise banks from which to attack it; and it was with difficulty that wood could be obtained to build them. In about a fortnight, however, the Romans were able to bring their engines to bear upon the walls; and the Jews despairing of defending themselves, fled, some to the citadel, and some to the caves and subterranean vaults. Some few remained to resist the Romans; but they were dejected and weak, and were easily overcome. The Romans having become masters of the walls, placed their ensigns upon the towers, shouting for joy, though they could scarcely believe they had gained so easy a victory. The silence throughout the city surprised them; but when they entered the lanes and houses, and found whole families who had perished by famine, their surprise was turned to horror.

When Titus himself entered this city, he was struck

with admiration at sight of the fine buildings, and particularly the towers, which the Jews had so madly deserted. He felt convinced that if they had exerted their usual strength he never should have been able to capture those strong places, and acknowledged to his friends his belief that a Superior Power had assisted him. As he entered within the wall which surrounded Mount Zion, he is said to have exclaimed, "We have had supernatural aid in this war! for what could the hands of man, or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers!" Josephus states that the number of Jews made captives was ninety-seven thousand, while those that perished during the siege were eleven hundred thousand. Thus ended the siege of Jerusalem.

There is no record of any cruelties exercised against Christians from the death of Nero till the latter end of the reign of Domitian, a period of about thirty years, in which it cannot be doubted but that Christianity continued to spread in all the provinces of the empire, as well as in other parts of the world. Vespasian attempted nothing against the Christians. Domitian, however, who in the latter part of his reign very much resembled Nero, imitated him also in his persecution of the Christians, though he does not appear to have carried it on with the same violence; and he seems to have been led to it by his jealousy and dislike of the Jews.

The prophecies concerning a king, or a conqueror, to arise in the East, probably continued to cause some alarm, so that the emperor was not quite easy

about them. Domitian, hearing that some relations of Jesus were living, gave orders that they should be executed, and two grandsons of the Apostle Judas who is called the brother of Jesus being sent to him, he inquired of them concerning their estates and property, and also, what were their opinions concerning Christ and his kingdom. They showed him their hands callous with labor, and proved that they maintained themselves by hard work; they then expressed their views of Christ's kingdom, that it was to be a spiritual and not an earthly one. Domitian was so well satisfied with these answers, that he not only dismissed them, but put a stop to the persecution, which was not resumed until the time of Trajan.

In this persecution the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, and there he had the vision which is recorded in the Book of Revelation. On the cessation of this persecution, he returned to Ephesus, and visited the churches in that neighborhood and the vicinity. He is said to have died in the succeeding reign.

Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, a man of an excellent disposition, the reverse of his predecessor. He forbade the persecution of any persons either for Judaism or for Christianity. He was succeeded by Trajan, whose reign is memorable as the beginning of a period of more than fifty years, which has been called "The happiest period of the world's history." Trajan, a general of the Roman army, was called to the throne when he was about fifty years old, from

an active life with the army in Germany. The real joy with which the people received him was apparent from the manner of their welcome. "The roofs of the houses," says one of his time, "were crowded; you could not see any place strong enough to bear a man on which one did not stand; every street was thronged, and only a narrow path left for the passage of the new emperor." "He came on foot, distinguished only by his height and grace. So different was he from other emperors, who were used to enter Rome, not merely in chariots drawn by white horses, but even on the shoulders of men." Trajan was eager to show that he did not belong to the same class of emperors as Nero and Caligula, two men who will never be forgotten, as warnings against licentiousness and cruelty. He received the title of The Best (Optimus), and deserved it as well as any of the early emperors. When he and his wife, after his inauguration at the capitol, went to the palace, she turned and said to the people, "I hope I may go from this place with the same feeling towards you with which I come in." She made good her hope by the gentleness of her life, and Trajan made good the promises with which he came to the throne.

There is a story of the emperor's kindness to a mother who had lost her son, which is thus told by the poet Dante. Dante had entered that circle of purgatory where spirits were atoning for the sin of pride. He found that on one side, as their steps moved upwards, was cut in pure, white marble, such

sculpture as not even Nature herself would have scorned. And these groups all imaged some scene that had been enacted on earth, in which the virtue of humility had been displayed. "Here was portrayed the sublime glory of that great Roman prince, the Emperor Trajan. Here a widow stood at his horse's head showing her grief by her tears. Behind him the ground was trampled and crowded by cavaliers, and eagles of gold moved in the wind. Among all these the miserable woman seemed to say, 'Sire, give me vengeance for my son, who is dead, and for whom I grieve.' He replied to her, 'Wait until I shall return.' Then she said, 'My lord,' as one whom grief renders impatient, 'and if you never return?' To which he answered, 'Whoever fills my place shall render you justice.' But the woman was not satisfied, and touches his conscience by saying, 'What will it avail you, the justice that another works, if you forget that you should do yourself.' At this he yielded. 'Console yourself,' he said, 'since I ought indeed to fulfil my duty, ere I move from here. Justice wills it, and pity retains me.'" It is said that Trajan found the slayer of the widow's son to be his own son. He offered him to the widow, asking her to receive him in place of him who was dead, and she was satisfied.

Such kindness of disposition was joined in Trajan with great skill in government, so that the Roman people owed to his reign new roads, cities, and new arrangements of law of the greatest value to them.

In the early part of this reign the Christians did not suffer from persecution. At this period in the Roman Empire, Christianity was giving a twilight even to those who did not acknowledge it as the truth, or did not even know its name. All over the Roman world were Christians; many more than when Paul met Nero at Rome. The children whom Paul knew were now old men. Their children were active Christian men and women. Wherever they were, were gentleness, truth, and firmness. Thus, many a man who did not know what it was to be religious, was made a better man by the better life around him.

But Trajan was intent upon restoring the bounds of the empire, and, being very superstitious, imagined, as the Heathens in general did, that this end could not be gained without the re-establishment of the ancient religion, under which the Roman Empire had been formed and flourished; and Christianity had by this time gained so much ground, that the festivals and sacrifices of the Heathen worship began to be so much neglected, especially in Asia Minor, and the eastern provinces of the empire, as to become the subject of great and general complaint.

The younger Pliny, the particular favorite of Trajan, and governor of Bithynia, was one, among others, who carried into execution the orders of the emperor, to restore the ancient religion. But so great was the number of persons whose lives were forfeited by this edict, that he was at a loss how to proceed, and there-

fore applied to the emperor for further instructions. The letter which he wrote on this occasion is extant, and is highly favorable to the Christians of that age. The emperor in his reply ordered that the Christians should not be sought out ; but, persisting in his measures, he ordered that if any were regularly convicted of being Christians and did not retract by performing some act of worship to the gods, they should be punished. The first martyr of note in this persecution was Simeon, the son of Cleopas the bishop of Jerusalem, who succeeded the Apostle James. He had lived to the age of more than a hundred years, and was one of the remaining few who had seen Jesus face to face. Some cruel informers, making false use of the Christian belief in the kingdom of heaven, dragged this old man before a magistrate. "For many days, tried by the most severe tortures, he constantly preserved his faith in Christ, so that the magistrate himself, and all who were present, greatly wondered in what way a man one hundred and twenty years old could bear such torture. At length, he was, by sentence, affixed to the cross." Another distinguished martyr was Ignatius, the second bishop of Antioch. He had heard St. Peter preach there, and knew St. John. He was so aged that it was said of him that he was the child whom Jesus took in his arms when he taught his disciples who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Ignatius was taken before the emperor himself, when he was on his expedition against the Parthians, and

was by him sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts at Rome. By a long voyage he was carried to Rome, that his death might be an amusement to the people at the shows in the amphitheatre. Having liberty to write, he expressed his sentiments in several letters addressed to particular churches, which with many interpolations are still extant. Every such cruelty as this but served to attract attention to the Christian faith. A scene like Ignatius's martyrdom was transacted in the presence of perhaps fifty thousand persons. They asked, they could not but ask, what Christians were. It is said that the manner in which Ignatius bore his sufferings moved Trajan's heart, when he heard of it, far away in the East, and that afterwards he was milder than ever toward the Christians.

His successor, Adrian, checked, as far as he could, the entering of complaints against them. He died in A.D. 138; and up to this time no trace is discovered of any doctrine or practice besides those which were derived from the apostles themselves, excepting that of the Gnostics, which was Christianity contaminated with the principles of the oriental philosophy. In the whole of this period the sole object of worship in all Christian churches was no other than the one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The religious rites of Christians of this early period were few and simple. Their public worship was probably like that of the Jews, to which they had been accustomed in their synagogues, where the

Scriptures were always read, and prayers offered, and where exhortations were occasionally given, and the portions of Scripture which were read in course were sometimes expounded. To these was added the administration of baptism. In general, it was, no doubt, performed by the immersion of the body in water, that being an easy and a pleasant custom in hot climates, and the dress was such as to be very easily put off and on. The baths also furnished conveniences for this ceremony in most places. In whatever the rite of baptism consisted, it was administered upon the simple profession of repentance, and faith in Christ. Judging from the instances of baptism occasionally mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, the persons who baptized did not think themselves obliged to make use of the form mentioned by Matthew, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" although nothing was originally intended by that besides baptism into a religion which came from God, which was published by Christ and confirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit, or miracles.

The persons who possessed the highest authority in the Church were the elders, a title which had been borne by the rulers of the Jewish synagogues; and the same persons were indifferently called bishops, or overseers; having the general inspection of the concerns of the Church according to their several qualifications; some in public teaching, others in keeping up order and discipline, others probably

visiting the sick, and others instructing the young, etc. Afterwards, the title bishop was appropriated to one of these elders, while the rest retained the appellation of *presbyters*, which in a later period was changed into *priests*. But in all the early ages the bishop had no power but as one of the body of elders, and what he derived from his personal influence ; and he had no office beyond his own church. Another order of persons in the primitive church was that of deacons ; a rank subordinate to that of elders. The deacons were generally young men, whose business it was to attend to the secular affairs of the society, under the direction of the elders. Women, and particularly widows who were poor were employed in certain offices in the church, probably in attending the sick, assisting strangers, etc., for which they were allowed a certain stipend. Such was the custom until a pretty late period in the history of Christianity.

In the period next following it could no longer be said, as hitherto it might have been, that there were few men of learning among the Christians. Philosophers, as well as other persons of learning, gave attention to the evidences of Christianity and became converts.

Antoninus Pius, who succeeded Adrian, and reigned twenty-three years, was one of the best of emperors, and was distinguished for his justice and humanity. He was far from persecuting the Christians, though they were persecuted in his reign, especially in the

beginning of it, by some governors of provinces. On this account Justin Martyr presented to Antoninus an apology for Christianity, which is still extant, and appears to have been well received; for the emperor issued an edict in favor of the Christians, and accordingly we have no account of any particular martyrdoms till the following reign of Marcus Aurelius; who, though an excellent emperor in other respects, was nevertheless a bigoted Heathen.

In the nineteenth year of the reign of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 156, appeared the sect of Montanus. He was a native of Phrygia. Being excommunicated by other churches, he and his converts held assemblies of their own but cherished the Christian belief. They were distinguished by greater austerity of manners, observed various rules of fasting, highly commended celibacy, etc. They pretended to the gift of prophecy, and when attacked by violent convulsions, as they were, or assumed to be, they gave utterance to language which their hearers believed to be inspired.

That persons of the mental character of Montanus should mistake the natural emotions of their own minds for divine impulses, is not at all extraordinary. We find even at this day how unwilling men of good sense in other respects are to surrender the idea of supernatural assistance, or of invisible miracles, such as are unsusceptible of proof. When they see men make great exertions, either in doing or suffering, they are apt to imagine that they have the aid of a

power higher than their own. They are even apt to think so with respect to themselves. This low estimate of the strength of the human mind, and the belief in the necessity of foreign aid to produce any thing great or good, is the foundation of all that enthusiasm, which in all ages, and to this very day, has been the disgrace of Christianity. It was in fact the same ignorance of the powers of nature, and the idea of the perpetual interference of superior powers in all the affairs of men, which laid the foundation of the whole system of Paganism. Hence the belief in the influence of the sun, moon, and stars in human affairs, and that the dead intermeddled with the concerns of the living; and hence all the strange rites and ceremonies which have ever been regarded as the medium through which the favor of those imaginary powers could be obtained. This sect spread chiefly in Asia Minor, where it arose. Its two most distinguished disciples were two women of fortune, Priscilla and Maximilla. Tertullian embraced it in Africa. We find no mention of it after the fifth century.

In the beginning of the reign of Marcus Aurelius many calamities befel the empire. The Tiber overflowed and did great damage in the city. After this followed a famine. The Parthians declared war against the Romans, and defeated their armies. Aurelius thereupon determined to maintain the religion of his ancestors, as a necessary means, in his estima-

tion without doubt, of preserving the empire and providing for the stability of it. He issued rigorous edicts against the Christians.

Sixty years of almost uninterrupted peace since the beginning of the second century had opened a wide field for the free development of Christianity. It had spread into every quarter of the Roman dominions. The western provinces, Gaul and Africa, rivalled the East in the number if not in the opulence of their Christian congregations. Christians were to be found in the court, in the camp, in the commercial market; they discharged all the duties, and did not decline any of the offices of society. They did not altogether shun the forum, or abandon all interest in the administration of government. In issuing an edict against the Christians, Aurelius may have imagined that he was consulting the public good by conciliating the alienated favor of the gods. But the superiority of the Christians to all the terrors of death appears at once to have astonished and mortified the Stoic pride of the emperor.

The persecution raged with the greatest violence in Asia Minor. The fame of the aged Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who suffered at this time, has obscured that of the other victims. Of these victims the names of only two have survived; one who manfully endured, the other who timidly apostatized in the hour of trial. The former, Germanicus, was forced to descend into the arena, where he fought gallantly, until the merciful proconsul entreated him to consider

his life and preserve it by offering sacrifice. In answer to the entreaty he only aroused to more vigorous action the wild beast, and in an instant obtained his immortality. The latter, Quintus, a Phrygian, had boastfully stimulated his brother Christians to throw themselves in the way of the persecution. He descended in haste into the arena; the first sight of the wild beasts so overcame his hollow courage that he consented to sacrifice, and his life was spared. Polycarp was the most distinguished Christian of the East; he had heard the apostle John; and he had long presided over the see of Smyrna. Having retired into a neighboring village, his place of concealment was betrayed by two slaves, whose confession had been extorted by torture. He exclaimed, "The will of God be done;" and ordering food to be prepared for the officers of justice, he requested time for prayer, in which he spent two hours. He was then placed upon an ass, and on a day of great public concourse conducted towards the town. On the way, Herod the Irenarch and his father Nicetus took him into their chariot, with the view of persuading him to sacrifice; but on his refusal, they thrust him out so rudely that his leg was bruised. Recovering himself he proceeded to the stadium with great cheerfulness, and being brought before the proconsul and urged by him to revile Christ, he answered, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me an injury; how can I blaspheme my king and my Saviour?" Being told that he would be thrown to the

wild beasts, and appearing indifferent to it, he was then threatened with fire ; to which he answered, " You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour ; thou knowest not that which burns forever and ever." The Jews and Heathens, for the former were in great numbers, and especially infuriated against the Christians, replied with an overwhelming shout, " This is the teacher of all Asia ; the overthrower of our gods ; who has prevented so many from sacrifice and the adoration of the gods." When they were about to nail him to the stake, he said, " Let me be as I am. He that enables me to bear the fire will also enable me to remain unmoved within the pile, without your fastening me with nails." As he did not die so soon as was anticipated, at the request of the people he was dispatched with a sword.

It was under Marcus Aurelius that Justin, the author of two celebrated apologies, suffered martyrdom, and thence acquired the title of Martyr, to distinguish him from other persons of the same name.

But the most shocking scene of barbarous persecution in this or any other reign, was exhibited at Lyons and Vienna, in Gaul.

The golden days of the Roman Empire had already begun to darken, and closed forever with the reign of Marcus the philosopher. The empire of the world became the prize of bold adventure, or the precarious gift of a lawless soldiery. During little more than a century, from the accession of Commodus to that of Dioclesian, more than twenty emperors flitted like

shadows along the tragic scene of the imperial palace. A long line of military adventurers, often strangers to the name, to the race, to the language of Rome, Africans and Syrians, Arabs and Thracians, seized the quickly shifting sceptre of the world. Commodus was a gladiator on the throne; he had neither the understanding nor the bigotry of his father, and did not interest himself in the affairs of the Christians, any more than in those of the empire in general. In consequence of this the Christian Church in general had peace, and increased greatly, and many persons of rank and fortune united with it. At Rome there was one celebrated Christian who suffered martyrdom, and there may have been others of whom we have no account, in other parts of the empire. Apollonius, a Roman senator, a man of letters, was accused by his own slave and condemned to death. Commodus reigned thirteen years, and was succeeded by Severus who reigned eighteen.

In the first part of the reign of Severus the Christians continued to be unmolested; but from the tenth year of Severus to his death the persecution was general and violent. Many Christians suffered in Africa during this reign, particularly in Alexandria, and in Egypt in general. At this time Leonidas the father of the famous Origen was beheaded. During this persecution Tertullian stood forth as the apologist of Christianity; and the tenor of his apology is illustrative of its altered position. It is not in the tone of tranquil expostulation against the barbarity

of persecuting blameless and unoffending men ; every sentence breathes scorn, defiance, menace, and heaps contempt upon the gods of Paganism.

Of all the histories of martyrdom, no one abounds in such exquisite touches of nature as that of Perpetua and Felicitas, two African females. Perpetua was a widow of about twenty-two years of age, of a good family, and well educated, who had a father and mother living, two brothers, and one child. Her father visited her in prison, and holding his child in his arms besought her to have compassion upon him ; he threw himself upon the ground, tore his beard, and did and said every thing that could have a tendency to move her ; but all without effect. The day before the exhibition they united in a love-feast with their Christian friends who were permitted to visit them, in the presence of many strangers whom curiosity had brought to the place. On the day of exhibition they went from the prison with erect and cheerful countenances, and as they entered the amphitheatre Perpetua advanced singing hymns. Perpetua and Felicitas were first inclosed in nets, to be gored by a furious wild cow. But the sight of two delicate women thus exposed struck the spectators with horror, and they were recalled by acclamation, and clad in loose robes. Perpetua was first tossed by the beast and thrown upon the ground. Rising as soon as she was able, and seeing Felicitas fainting and mortally wounded, she gave her her hand and assisted her to rise, and having kissed

each other, they resigned themselves to the hand of the executioner, who soon dispatched them with a sword.

Caracalla, the son of Severus, who reigned six years, from A.D. 211 to A.D. 217, was a monster of wickedness and cruelty, but he spared the Christians, as also did Heliogabalus, a man of a similar character. Some governors of provinces, however, persecuted them at this time. The reign of Alexander Severus, from A.D. 222 to A.D. 235, was peculiarly favorable to the Christians, in consequence of his mother, Mammæa, an excellent woman, openly protecting them. Hearing of the fame of the celebrated Origen, she sent for him while she was at Antioch, and retained him with her for some time. Maximin, a man of savage manners, who succeeded Alexander, was an enemy of the Christians. But the persecution did not extend to all the provinces of the empire. His reign did not exceed three years. There seems to have been no persecution of the Christians during the reign of Gordian, from A.D. 236 to A.D. 244, or in that of Philip, from A.D. 244 to A.D. 249.

The persecution under Decius was almost the first measure of a reign which commenced in successful rebellion, and ended, after two years, in fatal defeat; A.D. 249-251. The Christians were now a recognized body in the state, and Christian churches were established in different parts of the empire. Origen was exposed to cruel torments but escaped with his life. This distinguished Christian, when hardly eigh

teen years of age, undertook the charge of the school established by St. Mark at Alexandria. Young as he was when he undertook this charge, he was so resolute a worker that he was known by the name of Adamant. He was one of the most laborious students of whom we have any account. Although far advanced in life at the time of his persecution, he exhibited an example of that fortitude which he had so early in life recommended to others. He was subjected to various kinds of torture, care being taken that they should not absolutely deprive him of life. That he survived this persecution is certain, but by what means we are not informed. He wrote several letters afterwards to all those who were suffering, and died in the beginning of the following year at the age of seventy.

In the third year of the following reign, that of Valerian, A.D. 257, edicts were issued against the Christians, and the dignity of one of its victims conferred a melancholy celebrity upon this persecution.

The most distinguished prelate at this time in Western Christendom was Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. He was advanced in life when he embraced the doctrines of Christianity; but he entered on his new career with all the ardor and freshness of youth. His wealth was devoted to charitable uses. The first rumor of persecution designated the bishop of Carthage for its victim. "Cyprian to the lions!" was the loud and unanimous outcry of infuriated paganism. He at first withdrew from the storm to some

quiet retreat from which he wrote animating and consolatory letters to his brethren. His letters describe the relentless barbarity with which the Christians were treated. Not long after, an opportunity was afforded him of exhibiting the beautiful spirit of Christian forgiveness of injury to the people of the city which had thirsted for his blood. A plague was prevailing throughout the whole Roman world, exhibiting its most fearful scourges in the streets of Carthage. It spread from house to house, especially among those of the lower order, with awful rapidity. The streets were strewn with the bodies of the dead and dying, who vainly appealed to the laws of nature and humanity for that assistance of which those who passed them by might soon stand in need. Cyprian returning to Carthage exhorted the Christians to manifest the sincerity of their belief in the doctrines of their Master, not by confining their acts of kindness to their own brotherhood, but by extending them indiscriminately to their enemies. The city was divided into districts; offices were assigned to all the Christians; the rich lavished their wealth, the poor their personal exertions; and men, perhaps just emerged from prison, were seen exposing their lives to a more honorable martyrdom, if possible; as before the voluntary victims of Christian faith, so now of Christian charity; but the Heathen portion of the people, instead of being subdued by their acts of kindness, persisted in attributing the terrible scourge to the impiety of the Christians, which they regarded

as having provoked the gods. Cyprian was summoned before the proconsul and ordered to offer sacrifice. He refused with tranquil determination. He was treated while in custody with respect and even delicacy. The intelligence of his apprehension drew together the whole city; the Heathen, eager to behold the spectacle of his martyrdom; the Christians, to watch in their affectionate zeal the doors of his prison. His examination was brief, and he was sentenced to expiate his crime with his blood. He was carried into a neighboring field and beheaded, maintaining his serene composure to the last.

In the following reign, that of the luxurious and versatile Gallienus, peace was restored to the Church. The bishops resumed their public functions; the buildings were restored, and their property, which had been confiscated by the State, returned to the rightful owners. The last transient collision of Christianity with the government, before its final conflict under Dioclesian, took place, or was at least threatened, under the administration of the great Aurelian, A.D. 271–275. No hostile measures were taken against it in the early part of his reign, as he was occupied with warlike campaigns in every part of the world. Sanguinary edicts were issued towards the close of his life, though his death prevented their general promulgation.

The final contest between paganism and Christianity drew near. Almost three hundred years had elapsed since Christ had lived and preached in a small village in Palestine; and now, having gained so powerful an

ascendancy over the civilized world, the Gospel was to undergo its last and most trying ordeal before it should assume the reins of empire and become the established religion of the Roman world. The last fifty years, with the exception of the short interval of menaced, probably, of actual persecution during the reign of Aurelian, had passed in peace and security. The Christians had become not merely a public but an imposing and influential body; their churches had arisen in most of the cities of the empire, and their number was constantly on the increase. The Christians no longer declined or refused to aspire to the honors of the State. They filled offices of distinction, and even of supreme authority, in the provinces and in the army; they were exempted, either by tacit connivance or direct indulgence, from the accustomed sacrifices.

Among the more immediate attendants on the Emperor, two or three openly professed the Christian faith. Prisca the wife, and Valeria the daughter of Dioclesian and the wife of Galerius, who afterwards succeeded Dioclesian, were suspected, if not avowed converts to Christianity. In Paganism itself, a silent change had been creeping on. From Christianity the new philosophic Paganism had adopted the doctrine of the unity of the Deity, and scrupled not to degrade all the gods of the other world into subordinate ministers or spirits.

In A.D. 303, Dioclesian, instigated by his son-in-law Galerius issued the fatal edict that all who re-

fused to sacrifice should be burned alive. All public assemblies for the purposes of worship were prohibited. The Christians were degraded from all rank and office, and their property confiscated. The females of the imperial family were constrained to pollute themselves with sacrifice. Letters were dispatched requiring the coöperation of the western Emperors, Maximian the associate of Dioclesian, and the Cæsar Constantius, in the suppression of the hostile faith. Constantius commanded the demolition of their churches, but abstained from all violence against the persons of the Christians. The fiercer temper of Maximian readily acceded to the demand. Edict followed edict, each surpassing its predecessor in barbarity; many were executed, many drowned, and many burned alive; bishops and citizens were crowded into prisons intended only for the basest malefactors. In A.D. 304, Dioclesian abdicated the throne, leaving Galerius, the most implacable enemy of Christianity, master of the East, and the persecution was continued with unmitigated severity. But in no part of the world did Christianity show any signs of decay; it was far too deeply rooted in the minds of men. Its believers met in secret as their public worship was suspended. Its most signal and unexpected triumph, however, was over the author of the persecution.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, Galerius lay expiring of a most loathsome malady; the disease of Herod the Great, of Galerius, and of Philip the Second of Spain, was the same. The agonies he endured

would have more than satisfied the revengeful spirit of the most unchristian enemy. From his dying bed he issued an edict, apologizing for his past severities to the Christians, admitting to the fullest extent the total failure of the measures he had adopted for the suppression of Christianity, and permitting the free and public exercise of the Christian religion. Its close was still more remarkable; it contained an earnest request to the Christians to intercede for the suffering Emperor in their supplications to their God. The whole Roman world was thus made the witness of the public and humiliating acknowledgment of the dying Emperor. The prison doors were thrown open; the mines rendered up their condemned laborers; everywhere long trains of Christians were seen hastening to the ruins of their churches. The public roads, the streets and market-places of the towns, were crowded with long processions, singing psalms of thanksgiving for their deliverance.

But the East, the great scene of persecution, was not yet restored to prosperity or peace. On the death of Galerius, Maximian seized on the government of the whole of Asia. He placed himself at the head of the Pagan interest in the East, and endeavored to reorganize the Pagan religion in all its original pomp. The first overt act of hostility was a prohibition to the Christians to meet in their cemeteries, where probably their enthusiasm was wrought to the utmost height by the sacred thoughts associated with the graves of their martyrs. But the policy of Maxim-

ian, in general, confined itself to vexatious and harassing oppression, and to punishments which were productive of pain and wretchedness, but not of death.

Peace and prosperity, however, by no means followed the oppression of the Christians ; notwithstanding the restoration of the Polytheistic ceremonial in more than ordinary pomp, every species of calamity, tyranny, war, pestilence and famine, was visited upon the Asiatic provinces. Large villages were entirely depopulated ; many opulent families were reduced to beggary ; and many occupying respectable stations sold their children as slaves. The rapacity of the Emperor aggravated the general misery. The granaries of individuals were seized, their flocks and herds driven away, to be offered in unavailing sacrifice to the gods. The scanty and unwholesome food left produced its usual effect, a pestilential malady. The Christians alone were active in efforts to allay the miseries of which they were the common victims. They distributed bread ; they visited the infected houses ; they attended the living and buried the dead. The myriads who perished and were perishing in a state of absolute desertion, could not but acknowledge that Christianity was stronger than love of kindred. Maximian took the alarm, and endeavored, too late, to retrace his steps. He issued an edict, in which he avowed the plain principles of toleration. He commanded the suspension of all violent measures, and recommended that mild and persuasive means alone should be employed to win back the apostates to the

religion of their forefathers. The Christians, having been once deluded by a show of mercy, feared to reconstruct their fallen edifices, or to renew their public assemblies; and awaited, in trembling expectation, the issue of the approaching contest with Licinius. With Maximin expired the last hope of Paganism to maintain itself by the authority of the government.

But half the world still remained disunited from the dominion of Constantine and of Christianity. The first war with Licinius was terminated by a new partition of the empire. The favor shown by Constantine to his Christian subjects seems to have thrown Licinius upon the opposite interest. When the crisis approached which was to decide the fate of the whole empire, as Constantine had adopted every means of securing the cordial support of the Christians, Licinius repelled the allegiance of his Christian subjects by disfavor, by mistrust, by expulsion from offices of honor, and by open persecution. The Christians fled again into the country, and concealed themselves in the woods and caves. There was a wide spread apprehension that a new and general persecution was about to break out, when the Emperor of the West moved forward to rescue the whole of mankind from the tyranny of one man. The battle of Hadrianople, and the naval victory of Crispus, decided the fate of the world, and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire. The defeat of Licinius reunited the whole Roman world under the sceptre of Constantine, A. D. 323.

The successful conqueror, Constantine, was the son of Constantius, Emperor of Britain, Gaul, and Spain, upon whom a short time previous to his death the title of Augustus was conferred. At the age of twenty-nine Constantine succeeded his father, and thus became Emperor of the West, having power over all those parts of Europe now known as Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal; to these he soon after added Italy and Africa.

In his progress towards Italy an event occurred, according to tradition, which is supposed by many to have exercised a controlling influence over his future course. He was then a Heathen, although favoring the Christians from motives of interest. The tradition runs, that while marching with his army, a luminous cross appeared in the sky, placed above the sun, just after it had attained its meridian, and bearing the following inscription in Greek: "By this, conquer." The sign was interpreted as being the token of Christ's victory over death. The Christians affirmed that their Deity had thus made himself known. Constantine, although far from being convinced, was persuaded to consult the Christian Scriptures. He caused a banner to be prepared, surmounted by a golden crown, on which were inscribed mystic letters, significant of the name of Christ. To this he gave the name of Labarum. This standard was henceforth borne at the head of the imperial

armies, and the name of the meek and peaceful Jesus became the soldier's war-cry.

But the desire of embracing the true faith was wholly subordinate with Constantine to that of advancing his own power. The coöperation of the Christians was desirable; he was therefore willing to pay deference to their religion. He issued edicts full of unlimited toleration, and the day on which the Christians were wont to assemble was declared sacred. But this order for the observance of the Christian Sabbath was by no means a recognition of the sanctity of the day as a Christian institution; it was the "Sun's Day" that was to be observed with reverence; the courts were to be closed, and all townspeople and tradesmen were to cease from labor. The Christians were permitted to worship undisturbed by the sounds of clamor and toil in the thoroughfares; and the worshipper of the Sun could acquiesce without scruple in the observance of the first day of the week as a sacred day. A few years later Constantine's triumph over his colleague Licinius placed him in the position of leader of the Christians; and so far as the advocacy of their faith held out to him the promise of success and aggrandizement, he was its willing advocate; but ever in the Labarum there appeared, above the cross, the images of the emperor and his family, to whom the Heathen part of his army might pay their homage of veneration.

Having at length assured himself that by adopting Christianity as his religion he should obtain accession of power as a sovereign, he professed himself converted. He not merely enforced by his edict the restoration of the churches and estates of the Christians, but enabled them by the gift of a large sum of money to rebuild their ruined edifices. Many of the churches of Rome claim him for their founder.

Constantine has been called the first Christian emperor ; but the acts of cruelty which he perpetrated in the midst of his own family prove that he was very far from being a Christian. The murder of his wife, son, and nephew, in a fit of criminal and precipitate weakness, struck with horror the whole Roman world. The populace of Rome compared his reign to that of Nero ; and so universal was the odium against him that Rome became hateful to him. On the shores of the Bosphorus, upon the seven hills at Byzantium, he determined to found a rival Rome. No expense was spared to build a city worthy to be the seat of the empire. Every district, every city of the imperial realms, was laid under contribution and rifled of its riches, its artisans and its artists, for the benefit of the new capital. The imperial palace arose, in its dimensions and magnificence equal to that of the older city ; the mansions erected for the patricians evinced the greatest skill and elegance ; markets, fountains, aqueducts, theatres and forums, were built for the mass of the people, and the new city was called Constantinople, in honor of its founder.

Although Constantine openly countenanced the Christian religion, he nevertheless collected images of the pagan deities, and caused them to be set up, mingled with other works of art, in all the public places in the new city. On a pillar of porphyry, on the seven hills, he placed an image designed to be emblematic of the sun, of Christ, and of himself. The pillar rose to the height of one hundred and twenty feet. The colossal figure on its summit was that of Apollo, but the head of Constantine was substituted for that of the god. The sceptre in one hand, and the globe in the other, were emblematic of universal empire. Around the head, instead of rays, were fixed, it is said, the nails of the true cross. Thus Constantine was represented as maintaining the impartial dignity of emperor of the world, presiding with serene indifference over the various nations and religious sects which peopled his dominions.

Notwithstanding the many obstacles in the way of its development, Christianity was still going forward; and even during the reign of Constantine its triumphant progress tended to efface or to obscure the lingering vestiges of the ancient religion.

Although Constantine's ambition was gratified by the success of his undertakings, he was haunted by the remembrance of the crimes which he had perpetrated in the imperial household. In the deep agony of remorse he earnestly inquired of the ministers of the ancient religions whether his soul could be purified from the blood of a son; but they were compelled

to acknowledge that they knew of no relief. He then turned to the Christians, who endeavored to explain to the unhappy man the mercy of their God to the truly penitent. From that time he proclaimed himself the worshipper of the Christian's God, although he refused the sacred rite of baptism until towards the close of his life. In recognition of his guilt and his deep grief for the murder of his son, he erected a golden statue, with the simple but emphatic inscription, "To my unfortunate son."

The founding of Constantinople marks one of the great periods of change in the annals of the world. The removal of the seat of empire from Rome was favorable to the progress of Christianity. Up to that time there had been but little interference with the freedom of pagan worship. But by the gradual erection of large churches in many of the Eastern cities, Christianity began to assume an outward form and dignity commensurate with its character. Its attitude in relation to paganism was still however that of fair competition rather than of hostile invasion. It was content to behold the silent courts of the pagan fanes untrodden, save by a few casual worshippers — altars without victims — thin wreaths of smoke only where the air was once laden with clouds rising from reeking hecatombs, and to hear the priesthood murmuring in bitter envy at the throngs which passed by the porticos of their temples towards the Christian church.

Soon after Constantine began to favor the Chris-

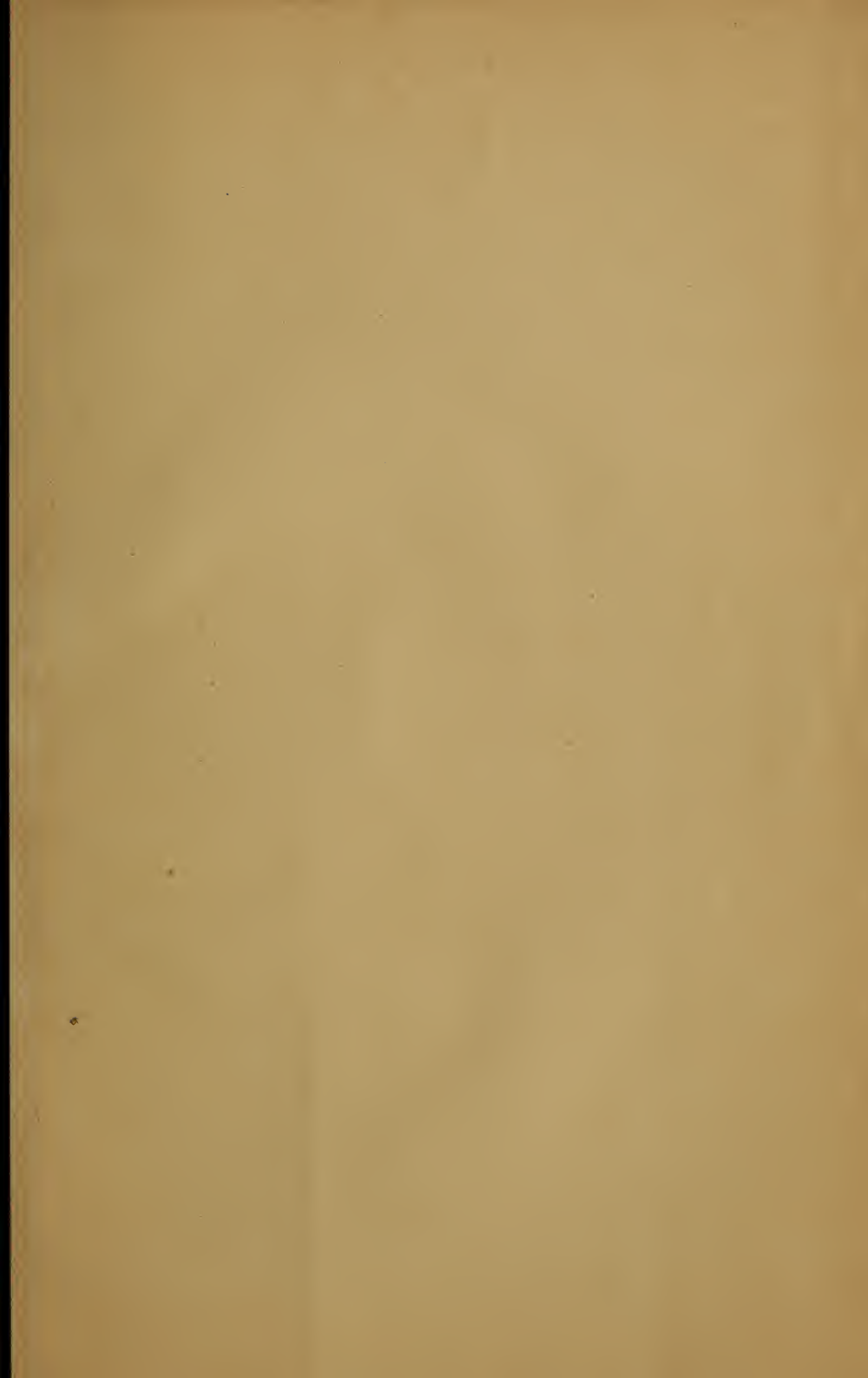
tians, Helena, the cherished parent of the Emperor, appears to have embraced their faith. After the terrible execution of her grand-son, whose death she bitterly lamented, the Empress Mother, then nearly eighty years of age, started on a pilgrimage to Palestine, already the Holy Land of the Christians. Her route was marked with charity and devotion. Splendid churches were raised by her over the place of Christ's birth, at Bethlehem, that of his burial, near Calvary, and that of his ascension, on the Mount of Olives. To receive the cross which Helena believed herself to have found in the sepulchre of the Saviour, Constantine ordered the erection of a magnificent Basilica, called at first the Church of the Resurrection, afterward that of the Holy Sepulchre, on the spot where the miraculous discovery had been made.

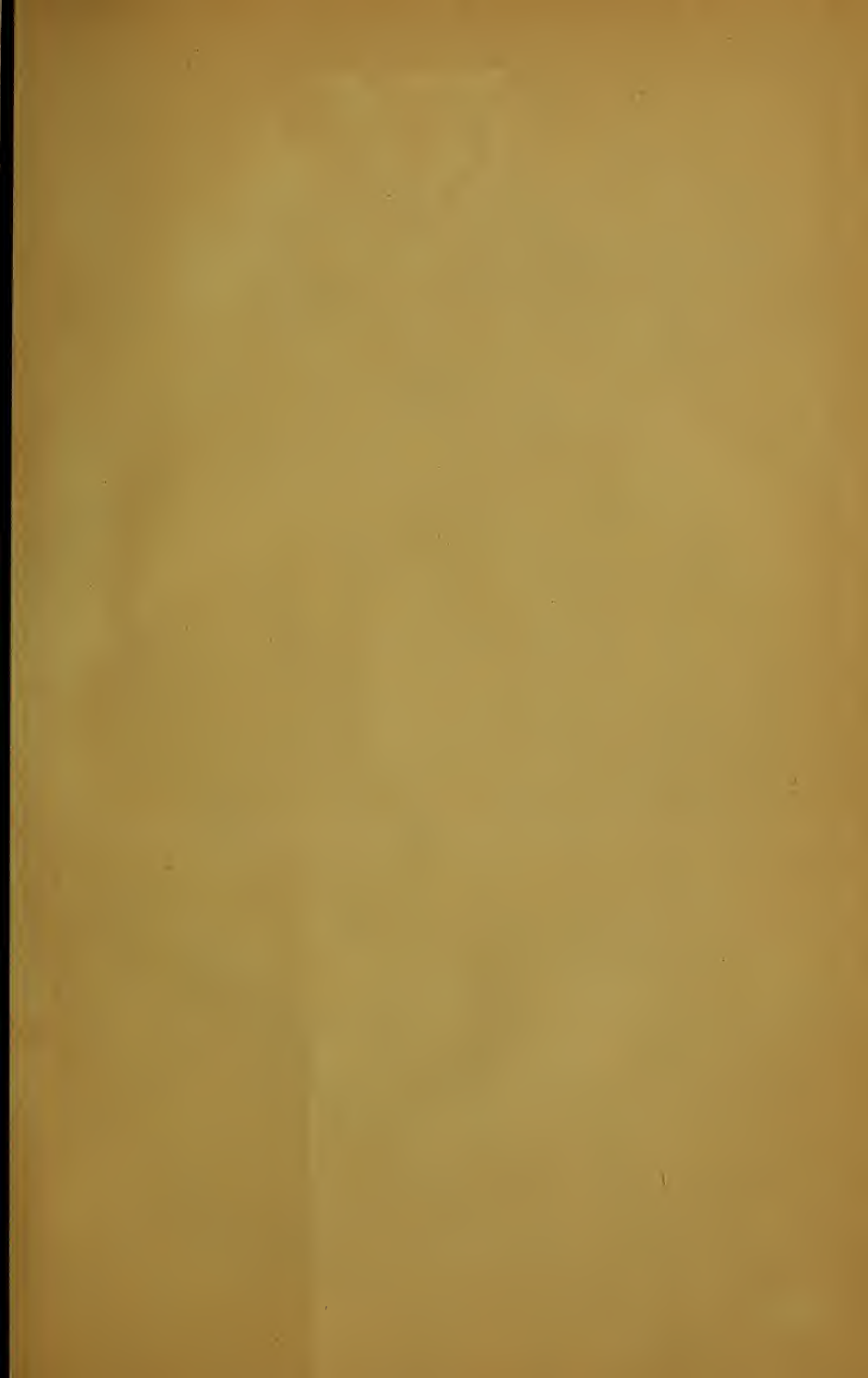
In the last year but one of his reign, Constantine apportioned his realms amongst his three sons and two nephews, all of whom were elevated to the rank of Cæsar. In the year following, feeling conscious that he was drawing near to the close of life, he sent for the bishops, that he might receive baptism from Christian hands. He laid aside the imperial purple to put on the white robe of the baptized, and in that white dress, a few hours after, he died. He was buried in the porch of the church dedicated to the Apostles.

Christians and pagans equally honored the memory of Constantine. His heathen subjects enrolled him amongst their deities ; at a later period the first Chris-

tian Emperor was worshipped as a saint by part of the Christian Church.

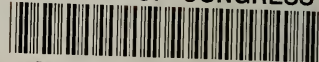
Three hundred and twenty-three years had elapsed since Christ made his religion known to mankind; and although its progress had been apparently slow, still, looking back upon the impediments in its pathway, the obstacles it had surmounted, its steady advance seems little less than miraculous. It had ceased to exist as a separate community; it had ascended the imperial throne; and in studying the history of that period, a change can be perceived in the condition of mankind, which can be attributed only to the direct authority or indirect influence of Christianity.







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